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**THE IMPERIAL SHAKESPEARE**  
**IN TEN VOLUMES**  
**VOLUME II**

*The annotations at the foot of the page are intended to explain difficult phrases or allusions. Single words, which are no longer in common use, appear only in the glossary, which is printed in last volume.*

*The numbering of the lines follows that of the Cambridge Edition, the text of which is used in this edition.*







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THE IMPERIAL EDITION OF  
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
**SHAKESPEARE**

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND A  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY  
SIR SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME II

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US WELL THAT ENDS WELL  
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM  
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW  
THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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# **ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL**

**WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW LANG  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY DUDLEY HARDY**



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## INTRODUCTION



THE comedy of "All's Well that Ends Well" is, perhaps, rather instructive than apt to provoke enthusiasm. Tennyson said that the composition of Shakespeare's plays, their genesis in the poet's mind, was a problem which entirely baffled him. In "All's Well that Ends Well," little as we know from external sources of the history of the piece, the intellectual processes appear unveiled. A play was wanted for the stage, perhaps in the poet's years as "Johannes Fac-totum." He took an Italian tale, which really "did not set his genius," did not set the genius of any dramatist working in his age and under his conditions. He wrote a piece full of the rhymed couplets, the euphuisms, the sonneteering of his early essays. Later, at an un-

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known date, I guess, a play was needed, and Shakespeare rapidly vamped up the comedy as we possess it, mainly in blank verse. Probably it was never very popular. We have no Quarto of "All's Well that Ends Well." The drama first appears in the Folio, and it is clear that the printers set up the piece from a very bad text. But I do not suppose that such a distasteful passage as Helena's wit-combat with Parolles about virginity is mere "gag," an interpolation by the actors. Those who think so love Shakespeare, unlike Ben Jonson, on the other side of idolatry. George III was quite right, Shakespeare was very capable of having such things happen to him. In "All's Well that Ends Well" we have the work of the practical play-writer of the company, and the *charpentage* of the playwright is better than in "Cymbeline," for example.

The true poet — like cheerfulness on the philosophical reflections of Dr. Johnson's early friend, — "keeps breaking in," and the humourist makes gallant play with a character not present in the original story from Boccaccio, with that stock personage of the comedy, the Miles Gloriosus. Parolles is like Gullio in "The Return from Parnassus"; but a pretence of valour, not of taste and learning, is the motive of Parolles, "the vile Parolles," Mr. Israel Gollancz calls him. For me, no Parolles, no "All's Well that Ends Well!" The rascal "has given me medicines to make me love him." Shakespeare's rogues are dear to the readers as to the kind, smiling poet. But the poet is hampered by the intractable nature of his material. He seized on a story

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that would not be handled. The date of the piece, whether in the hypothetical early form, or in its actual shape, is unknown. Meres, in his "*Palladis Tamia*" (1598) mentions Shakespeare's "*Love's Labour's Won*," otherwise unnoted. "*Love's Labour's Lost*" is certainly an early play, answering in Shakespeare's work to "*Les Précieuses Ridicules*," in that of Molière. The quarto of "*Love's Labour's Lost*" is of 1598, but was then "newly corrected and augmented." It must have been an early success, rewritten in 1598. It was natural that Shakespeare should follow it up with a comedy which, in 1598, still bore the title of "*Love's Labour's Won*." The name is appropriate to the dingy triumph which crowns the long and complicated labour of the love of Helena. Later, Shakespeare, in his second manner, may well have "newly corrected and augmented" "*Love's Labour's Won*," and produced it on the stage as "*All's Well that Ends Well*."

The story of the piece reached Shakespeare through Painter's translation in "*The Palace of Pleasure*" (1566) of a novel from the *Decameron*. "Giletta, a physician's daughter of Narbon, healed the French king of a *Fistula*, for reward whereof she demanded Beltramo, Count of Rossiglione, to husband. The Count, being married against his will, for despite fled to Florence and loved another; Giletta his wife by policy found means to be with her husband in place of his lover, and was begotten with child of two sons: which known to her husband, he received her again, and afterwards he lived in great honour and felicity."



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Too clearly "this will never do." Human nature, pitiful of her who "never told her love," revolts from the girl who does tell it, unasked, who, *tout entière a sa proie attachée*, seizes her advantage, and makes the King confer on her the hand of his reluctant ward: the King, by feudal privilege, having his ward's marriage. Bertram is but a boy: he is too young to go to the wars, which boys sought so early in the Middle Ages. "'Too young,' and 'the next year,' and 'it is too early.'" Helena, in the play, not in Boccaccio, is clearly older and more mature than the lad who is beguiled into thinking Parolles a hero. If the King had thus thrust a man on a reluctant girl ward, all the world would cry shame. And if the man, by Helena's trick, obtained "restitution of conjugal rights," we should deem worse of him than of d'Artagnan when he so shamefully deceives Milady. The act is not seemly in Mariana, in Helena it is shameful. Again, Shakespeare, who otherwise follows Boccaccio very closely, makes Bertram a cur and a liar, in his repudiation of Diana as a public light o' love, a leaguer lass. In the "Decameron," the sight of his two sons, the ring, and his vow, reconcile the Count to his wife: the infamy of Bertram, worse than the mere knavery of Parolles, is wilfully thrown in by the poet. Halliwell Phillipps says that it is "dangerous" to speak with common-sense about the art of Shakespeare. It is not a danger dire enough to terrify *constantem virum*. Shakespeare, probably in a hurry, chose an impossibly unsympathetic plot, and darkened what was already repulsive to all who respect womankind and mankind.

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How was the situation to be redeemed, how was Shakespeare to win our sympathy for Helena? Sympathy then was, perhaps it is no longer, with patient Grizel. A woman must endure everything; and even now hearts are touched when Helena exclaims, as if the words were wrung from her,

“Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.”

Helena, her quality of *crampon* apart, is to the peevish false boy whom she adores as Titania to Bottom. Her soliloquy of love is worthy of the poet. Bertram is leaving her, her dear father has been spoken of, she weeps as the women of Achilles wept when Patroclus fell, “in seeming for Patroclus, but each for her own sorrows.” It is for Bertram that she “lets these tears down fall.”

*Hel.* O, were that all! I think not on my father;  
And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?  
I have forgot him: my imagination  
Carries no favour in 't but Bertram's.  
I am undone: there is no living, none,  
If Bertram be away. 'T were all one  
That I should love a bright particular star  
And think to wed it, he is so above me:  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.  
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself:  
The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. 'T was pretty, though a plague,  
To see him every hour; to sit and draw  
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,

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generosity, and young without truth, who marries Helena as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate ; when she is dead by his unkindness sneaks home to another marriage ; is accused by a woman he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness."

In part the Doctor is wrong. The King could have married Bertram to the ugliest widow in his realm. Again, nothing in Bertram's life "became him like the leaving" Helena. It was his duty not to live in the loveless wedlock thrust upon him : though not to repel the enforced bride with lack of courtesy. For the rest, regardless of Hazlitt and Mrs. Jameson, my heart is with Dr. Johnson. Shakespeare makes Helena — her passion apart — delightful. She has tenderness, wisdom, gentleness, and even humour. Unlike Mr. Israel Gollancz, she appreciates Parolles. She holds with him a wit-combat, that is not very witty, or of a "scrupulous female delicacy." She has a just estimate of Parolles, who easily imposes on Bertram's stupid boyhood.

" I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;  
Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him  
That they take place when virtue's steely bones  
Look bleak i' the cold wind."

Shakespeare, then, to make Helena sympathetic, has robed her in all the virtues and graces. Her tact, the affair of Bertram apart, is faultless ; her wisdom, goodness, delicacy, and humorous appreciation (the affair of Bertram apart) are exquisite. Unluckily the more of genius the poet lavishes on his heroine, the more incredi-

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ble does she become. This is not the woman to lose her heart to a pretty boy of fifteen, too young to go to the wars even in the age of the Renaissance. Younger than he have gallant soldiers made, in many a war. Helena, even if her mature wisdom could permit her to be tangled in Bertram's hair and fettered by his eye, for a while, would have plucked the passion out of her heart. On the contrary she gains "the hound" (thus freely speaks Herr George Brandes concerning Bertram) by means and tricks intolerable.

Herr Brandes has an explanation of Shakespeare's error, which perhaps he does not carry to its logical conclusion. The poet wrote "Love's Labour's Won" in youth, and in the light tone and rhyming method of which traces remain. In later years he found the world out of joint, became pessimistic, and unpacked his bosom in "Hamlet." But, his company being far from prosperous, bright little modern pieces had to be produced. "The thing had to be done." So Shakespeare, still as one in doleful dumps, took up his old bright little piece, "Love's Labour's Won," and tried to make a comedy out of that. "But now it did not turn out a comedy; the time was past when Shakespeare's chief strength lay in his humour." Herr Brandes is inconsistent. He admits that the banter about virginity, between Parolles and Helena, is part of the original early "Love's Labour's Won." Certainly Shakespeare's strength did not always lie in his humour, in the early days when he created *that* scene. Again, Parolles, in "All's Well that Ends Well," is regarded, as "in all probability, touched up and endowed

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with new wit during the revision." Therefore Shakespeare had more wit to spend after writing "Hamlet" than in the early days when "his strength lay in his humour." Herr Brandes cannot have it both ways, one way in his first, the other way in his second volume. If Shakespeare lost his humour, it is impossible that Parolles should be "the first faint outline of the figure which, seven or eight years later, became the immortal Falstaff," for, in these years, Shakespeare was growing in humour as Falstaff was putting on flesh. Nor could Shakespeare's humour have been fading, if he later improved, after writing "Hamlet," in "All's Well that Ends Well," on the first draft of Parolles in "Love's Labour's Won."

We cannot disengage Shakespeare's emotional development from his plays. Of course we might argue the matter out on these lines. The bilious, morbid post-Hamletian Shakespeare says:—

"They want a comedy do they? I'll give them a comedy! Naught is everything, and everything is naught. That is the humour of it; that is the humour of everything in this lazar house of a life, in all this empty imposture of a world! Ho, boy, a flagon of that poor creature, small beer! I'll take up that empty little babyish 'Love's Labour's Won' of my salad days. I shall make Helena a perfect woman, nobly planned to warn, to comfort, and command, and I shall show how her whole moral nature is upset,—as in this pitiful life it would certainly be,—by the eyes and curls of a pretty, profligate, false, mannerless wretch of a boy. She shall sink deeper than ever plummet sounds, she shall marry

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him against his will, and win him by a trick that would sicken Nym and Pistol. I must make him a perfect hound, of course, a mean, malignant liar. I must drag the excellent Florentine widow, and the maidenly Diana through the mud, — what is life but mud ? Ho, drawer, another firkin of your poor creature : I thirst ! Then I must leave the peerless Helena in the arms of her moral poltroon, and add the cynical title, ‘ All ’s Well that Ends Well.’ ‘ Well,’ ha, ha ! Nothing is well, William feels far from well !” [ *Drinks.*

Accepting this little soliloquy, we can understand how the melancholy William, after the Dark Lady showed in her true colours, and Essex came to grief, and things in general went wrong, and there was something rotten in the state of England, wrote “ All ’s Well that Ends Well,” when, in fact, everything ended horribly ill, and the married Bertram gave Helena cause for anxiety, and probably took to drink, and beat her. These things were in Bertram’s character. But we do not accept the soliloquy, or the idea that the piece is a pessimistic satire on human existence. Shakespeare had to turn out a comedy, in the way of business. He was lazy, and took up and revamped an old piece of his youth, a piece in which he was trysted with a perfectly impossible plot. He poured forth his genius on Helena ; he created the old Countess (the best of women), he left the Clown as witless as he had always been ; he left great boulders of his early rhymed scenes in the midst of his blank verse ; all this just because Shakespeare was hurried, lazy, and did not care. He was a very human being, and never took him-

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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self with the portentous and admirable seriousness of the third-rate modern novelist. At least it is thus that I try to understand the man, not as the bitter mocker who wrote "All's Well that Ends Well" to be a satire on human excellence. We may look at it in that light, but nobody did so in the age either of Shakespeare or of Boccaccio. "Did she get him?" was all that Mr. Barrie's old Thrums lady asked to be told in a novel. Helena "got him," and all's well that ends well. The groundlings asked no more, but probably the play was never more popular than it deserved to be. Mr. Pepys saw "All's Lost by Lust," but he does not mention any performance of "All's Well that Ends Well."

As a comedy, the piece is saved by "the vile Parolles." Herr Brandes thinks that Parolles was invented and introduced to afford some excuse for the iniquity of Bertram, a boy deceived and trained by such a Mentor.

Though the Countess hints at this as an excuse for her son, more probably the stock figure of the braggart mercenary, who has haunted every camp, and speaks every tongue of Central and Southern Europe, was brought in merely for "comic relief," which the dull clown (no doubt very like a clown in real life), does not supply. We have many notable studies of cowardice. The poltroonery of Falstaff is but part of his humour: no doubt he had been a tall man of his hands. Eachan, in "The Fair Maid of Perth," is a coward because he has "drunk the milk of the white doe," and so drawn the curse into his blood. He knows and hates his own weakness; his temper is high, but his character does not back him; he is a tragic

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coward, not a comic poltroon, and wins pity not laughter. A recent hero of modern romance in Mr. Mason's "The Four Feathers," is only a coward in conceit, afraid of being afraid ; but, unlike Eachan, he conquers himself. Parolles, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, is a comic coward ; his imagination is all warlike and chivalresque ; life is a burden under the dishonour of the lost drum : he dreams of military distinction as a child does, but has no more heart than a hare, and knows it. The cowardice sits well on Parolles, because he is all false together, whereas cowardice is tragical when it is the ineradicable fundamental sin of a nature otherwise noble. For evidence to character Parolles appeals to Captain Spurio of the regiment of the Spinii, "with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his sinister cheek : it was this very sword entrenched it ; say to him : I live, and observe his reports for me." They had "begun to smoke" Parolles, before he had the happy idea of pretending to recover that regimental palladium, the lost drum. Perhaps he might beg, borrow, or steal a drum, "this or another." The marvel is that "he should know what he is, yet be what he is." But what would you have ? Renown in war is the ideal of Parolles, it is creditable to him that he has an ideal : and he has the strongest sense of humour. He remotely resembles the delightful Chevalier Burke, in Mr. Stevenson's "Master of Ballantrae." He can laugh himself out of most quandaries. Listeners to him, when he supposes himself in the hands of a barbaric enemy, hear no more good of themselves than the Duke heard from Lucio, or Poins from Falstaff. Parolles would ever



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be and move "under the influence of the most received star," the most fashionable of the hosts of heaven; but, alas, he "was created for men to breathe themselves on," like the wooden soldan on whom poor Oliver Proudfoot, that honest Parolles of Perth, exercised his weapon. "Tongue, I must put you in a butter-woman's mouth, and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils." Why Bajazet's mule? Probably the animal was admired for its reticence. Mr. Israel Gollancz suggests that perhaps 'Bajazet's' is a blunder on the part of Parolles for 'Balaam's.' But Balaam has no mule, an ass was Balaam's steed, and that ass "*parle, et même il parle bien*." It was a still tongue that Parolles needed to borrow. Parolles gets off easily: no poetic justice ever falls on Shakespeare's poor merry rogues. He is to his characters a forgiving creator: he made them so, and will not damn them for no fault of theirs. He would have shewn mercy to Mr. Squeers and Mr. Pecksniff.

"By foolery thrive,  
There's place and means for every man alive,"

says the detected but optimistic Parolles. "If my heart were great, 't would burst at this." Happily the heart of Parolles is not great, and he has a smiling future as a buffoon, like the clown, "a shrewd knave and an unhappy." Motley is Parolles's only safe and profitable wear, "a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched." The tolerant Shakespeare forgives Bertram too, in the high tide of his false meanness, when Lafeu rejects him with, "Your reputation comes too short for my daugh-

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er ; you are no husband for her." But Bertram is good enough for the peerless Helena. So we end with [*Flourish*] "she has got him," —

"I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly."

Shakespeare's hack-work is finished, as heaven would have it, and we may believe that, the needs of the company satisfied, he never thought of his play again.

ANDREW LANG.



**ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

KING OF FRANCE.

DUKE OF FLORENCE.

BERTRAM, Count of Rousillon.

LAFFU, an old lord.

PAROLLES, a follower of Bertram.

Steward,  
LAVACHE, a Clown, } servants to the Countess of Rousillon.

A Page.

COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, mother to Bertram.

HELENA, a gentlewoman protected by the Countess.

An old Widow of Florence.

DIANA, daughter to the Widow.

VIOLENTA, }  
MARIANA, } neighbours and friends to the Widow.

Lords, Officers, Soldiers, &c., French and Florentine.

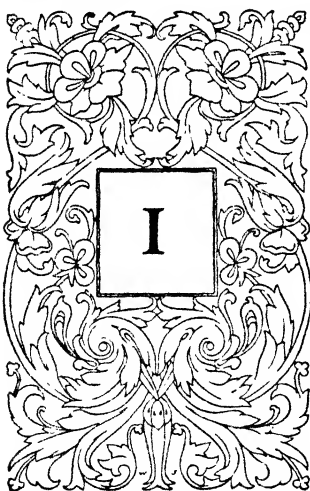
SCENE — *Rousillon ; Paris ; Florence ; Marseilles*

<sup>1</sup>DRAMATIS PERSONÆ] “All’s Well” was printed for the first time in the Folio of 1623. There the text is divided into acts, but not into scenes, although the play opens with the words *Actus Primus, Scena Prima*. Rowe first supplied scenic divisions, as well as a list of “*dramatis personæ*,” in his edition of 1709.



ACT FIRST—SCENE I—ROUSILLON  
THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, HELENA, and LAFEU,*  
COUNTESS *all in black*



N DELIVERING MY SON  
from me, I bury a second husband.

BER. And I in going, madam,  
weep o'er my father's death anew:  
but I must attend his majesty's  
command, to whom I am now in  
ward, evermore in subjection.

LAF. You shall find of the king  
a husband, madam ; you, sir, a  
father : he that so generally is  
at all times good, must of ne-  
cessity hold his virtue to you ;  
whose worthiness would stir it  
up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is  
such abundance.

10

5-6 *in ward*] In feudal and Elizabethan England heirs of great fortunes  
were invariably made wards of the king ; he acted as their guardian.

7-10 *he that so generally . . . abundance*] he that is so invariably kind

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

---

COUNT. What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?

LAF. He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

COUNT. This young gentlewoman had a father, — O, that "had"! how sad a passage 't is! — whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the king's sake, <sup>20</sup> he were living! I think it would be the death of the king's disease.

LAF. How called you the man you speak of, madam?

COUNT. He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so, — Gerard de Narbon.

LAF. He was excellent indeed, madam: the king very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

BER. What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of?

LAF. A fistula, my lord.

<sup>30</sup>

BER. I heard not of it before.

must needs extend his (virtue of) kindness towards you, whose worth would be more likely to excite kindly feelings in those who are without them than to alienate them in one who is so richly endowed with them.

13 *persecuted time with hope*] The general meaning is: Hope of recovery, fostered by his physicians, has hampered the action of (time in developing) the disease. But the only real effect (since the disease is not arrested) is to lose hope, as time goes on.

# SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

LAF. I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon ?

COUNT. His sole child, my lord ; and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises ; her disposition she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer ; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity ; they are virtues and traitors too : in her they are the better for their simpleness ; she derives her honesty and achieves her goodness.

40

LAF. Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

COUNT. 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena, go to, no more ; lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to have —

HEL. I do affect a sorrow, indeed, but I have it too.

LAF. Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead ; excessive grief the enemy to the living.

37 *virtuous qualities*] qualities of good breeding, grace, erudition, the fruits of education : not here qualities of moral virtue.

38 *go with pity*] are to be regretted, are to be deprecated : *virtues and traitors* ; excellences which mislead as to the true character of their possessors. Cf. Bassanio's observation, *Merch. of Ven.*, I, iii, 180 : " I like not fair terms and a villain's mind."

39 *simpleness*] singleness, integrity, freedom from deceit or uncleanness.

46 *livelihood*] life, liveliness. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 26 : " pith and livelihood " — the attributes of Adonis's sweating palm.



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

COUNT. If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess 50  
makes it soon mortal.

BER. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

LAF. How understand we that ?

COUNT. Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy  
father

In manners, as in shape ! thy blood and virtue  
Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness  
Share with thy birthright ! Love all, trust a few,  
Do wrong to none : be able for thine enemy  
Rather in power than use ; and keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key : be check'd for silence, 60  
But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,  
That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down,  
Fall on thy head ! Farewell, my lord ;  
'Tis an unseason'd courtier ; good my lord,  
Advise him.

LAF. He cannot want the best  
That shall attend his love.

COUNT. Heaven bless him ! Farewell, Bertram. [*Exit.*]

BER. [*To Helena*] The best wishes that can be forged  
in your thoughts be servants to you ! Be comfortable  
to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her. 70

LAF. Farewell, pretty lady : you must hold the credit  
of your father. [*Exeunt Bertram and Lafeu.*]

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50-51 *excess . . . mortal*] excessive indulgence in grief puts an end  
to it. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, iii, 52 :

“ no sorrow  
But killed itself much sooner.”

and *Rich. II*, II, i, 33 seq. : “ Violent fires soon burn out themselves.”

SCENE I    ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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HEL. O, were that all ! I think not on my father ;  
And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
Than those I shed for him. What was he like ?  
I have forgot him : my imagination  
Carries no favour in 't but Bertram's.  
I am undone : there is no living, none,  
If Bertram be away. 'T were all one  
That I should love a bright particular star 80  
And think to wed it, he is so above me :  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.  
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself :  
The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. 'T was pretty, though a plague,  
To see him every hour ; to sit and draw  
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,  
In our heart's table ; heart too capable  
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour : 90  
But now he 's gone, and my idolatrous fancy  
Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here ?

*Enter PAROLLES*

[*Aside*] One that goes with him : I love him for his sake ;  
And yet I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;  
Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him,  
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones

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74-75 *grace his remembrance . . . shed for him*] are mere ornamental  
tributes to his memory rather than outpourings of past affection.

97 *take place*] hold their own.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

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Look bleak i' the cold wind: withal, full oft we  
see

Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

PAR. Save you, fair queen !

100

HEL. And you, monarch !

PAR. No.

HEL. And no.

PAR. Are you meditating on virginity ?

HEL. Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you :  
let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity ;  
how may we barricado it against him ?

PAR. Keep him out.

HEL. But he assails ; and our virginity, though  
valiant, in the defence yet is weak : unfold to us some  
warlike resistance.

111

PAR. There is none: man, sitting down before you,  
will undermine you and blow you up.

HEL. Bless our poor virginity from underminers and  
blowers up ! Is there no military policy, how virgins  
might blow up men ?

PAR. Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier  
be blown up : marry, in blowing him down again, with  
the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is  
not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve  
virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase, and  
there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost.  
That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Vir-  
ginity by being once lost may be ten times found ; by

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99 *Cold wisdom . . . folly*] cheerless wisdom holding a place of inferiority to folly, which has no call to exist.

being ever kept, it is ever lost: 't is too cold a companion; away with 't!

HEL. I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin. 127

PAR. There's little can be said in 't; 't is against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity, is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin: virginity murders itself; and should be buried in highways out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by 't: out with 't! within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase; and the principle itself not much the worse: away with 't! 140

HEL. How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

PAR. Let me see: marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'T is a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth: off with 't while 't is vendible; answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion; richly suited, but unsuitable: just like the brooch and the

139 *ten*] The First Folio reads *two*. *Ten*, which is Hamner's emendation, is obviously correct. Cf. *Sonnet* vi, 9-10 (which treats of the same topic):

" *Ten* times thyself were happier than thou art,  
If ten of thine *ten* times refigured thee."

tooth-pick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek: and your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears, it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 't is a withered pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet 't is a withered pear: will you any thing with it?

HEL. Not my virginity yet. . . . .

153

There shall your master have a thousand loves,

A mother and a mistress and a friend,

A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,

A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,

A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;

His humble ambition, proud humility,

His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,

160

His faith, his sweet disaster: with a world

Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms,

That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he —

I know not what he shall. God send him well!

The court's a learning place, and he is one —

PAR. What one, i' faith?

HEL. That I wish well. 'T is pity —

PAR. What's pity?

HEL. That wishing well had not a body in 't,

Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born,

170

147 *wear not now*] are now out of fashion.

*date*] a pun on the word in its two senses of "fruit" and "time of life." Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, I, ii, 249: "And then to be baked with no *date* in the pie, for then the man's *date* is out."

162-163 *adoptious . . . gossips*] assumed Christian names, for which purblind Love is sponsor.

Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,  
Might with effects of them follow our friends,  
And show what we alone must think, which never  
Returns us thanks.

*Enter PAGE*

PAGE. Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you. *[Exit.*

PAR. Little Helen, farewell: if I can remember thee,  
I will think of thee at court.

HEL. Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a  
charitable star.

PAR. Under Mars, I. 180

HEL. I especially think, under Mars.

PAR. Why under Mars?

HEL. The wars have so kept you under, that you  
must needs be born under Mars.

PAR. When he was predominant.

HEL. When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

PAR. Why think you so?

HEL. You go so much backward when you fight.

PAR. That's for advantage. 189

HEL. So is running away, when fear proposes the  
safety: but the composition that your valour and fear  
makes in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the  
wear well.

PAR. I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee

---

191-192 *composition . . . wing*] valour, which causes you to run (back-  
ward, as you say, to get up impetus), and fear, which also impels  
you to run (away), make up your being, of which the power of  
flight is consequently the main characteristic.

acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends: get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee: so, farewell. [Exit. 201

HEL. Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,  
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky  
Gives us free scope: only doth backward pull  
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.  
What power is it which mounts my love so high;  
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?  
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings  
To join like likes and kiss like native things.  
Impossible be strange attempts to those 210  
That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose  
What hath been cannot be: who ever strove  
To show her merit, that did miss her love?  
The king's disease — my project may deceive me,  
But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me. [Exit.

208–212 *The mightiest space . . . cannot be*] The widest difference of fortune is bridged by nature, which brings together like objects, however far apart they may happen to be, and makes things of inherent similitude kiss or unite, whatever distance separates them. Impossible are unusual attempts to those who judge their efforts by normal experience and suppose that an exceptional occurrence can never recur. Hammer's generally accepted change of *What hath been* (l. 212) into *What hath not been* scarcely improves the sense and injures the metre.

SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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SCENE II — PARIS

THE KING'S PALACE

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING OF FRANCE with letters, and divers Attendants*

KING. The Florentines and Senoys are by the ears ;  
Have fought with equal fortune, and continue  
A braving war.

FIRST LORD. So 't is reported, sir.

KING. Nay, 't is most credible ; we here receive it  
A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,  
With caution, that the Florentine will move us  
For speedy aid ; wherein our dearest friend  
Prejudicates the business, and would seem  
To have us make denial.

FIRST LORD. His love and wisdom,  
Approved so to your majesty, may plead  
For amplest credence.

10

KING. He hath arm'd our answer,  
And Florence is denied before he comes :  
Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see  
The Tuscan service, freely have they leave  
To stand on either part.

SEC. LORD. It well may serve

1 *Senoys*] This is Painter's rendering in *The Palace of Pleasure* of  
Boccaccio's "Sanesi," i. e. the people of Sienna.

11 *arm'd*] made ready, or confirmed.



A nursery to our gentry, who are sick  
For breathing and exploit.

KING.                                      What's he comes here?

*Enter BERTRAM, LAFFEU, and PAROLLES*

FIRST LORD. It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,  
Young Bertram.

KING.                      Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face ;  
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste.                                      20  
Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts  
Mayst thou inherit too ! Welcome to Paris.

BER. My thanks and duty are your majesty's.

KING. I would I had that corporal soundness now,  
As when thy father and myself in friendship  
First tried our soldiership ! He did look far  
Into the service of the time, and was  
Discipled of the bravest : he lasted long ;  
But on us both did haggish age steal on,  
And wore us out of act. It much repairs me                                      30  
To talk of your good father. In his youth  
He had the wit, which I can well observe  
To-day in our young lords ; but they may jest  
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted

---

33-38 *they may jest . . . awaked them*] they may go on jesting till they wear all point out of their gibes before they can cover their petty follies with meritorious achievement. He was so courtierlike, so urbane, that there was nothing of contempt in his dignified bearing nor aught of bitterness in his keenness of wit. If bitterness or scorn ever appeared, it was a man of his own rank who evoked them.

## SCENE II ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Ere they can hide their levity in honour :  
 So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness  
 Were in his pride or sharpness ; if they were,  
 His equal had awaked them ; and his honour,  
 Clock to itself, knew the true minute when  
 Exception bid him speak, and at this time 40  
 His tongue obey'd his hand : who were below him  
 He used as creatures of another place ;  
 And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,  
 Making them proud of his humility,  
 In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man  
 Might be a copy to these younger times ;  
 Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now  
 But goers backward.

BER. His good remembrance, sir,  
 Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb ;  
 So in approof lives not his epitaph 50  
 As in your royal speech.

KING. Would I were with him ! He would always  
 say —  
 Methinks I hear him now ; his plausible words

---

40 *Exception*] Blame, disapproval, the duty to take exception. Cf.  
*Hamlet*, V, ii, 223 :

“ What I have done,  
 That might your nature, honour and *exception*  
 Roughly awake.”

42 *creatures of another place*] of another and of superior rank to that  
 which they really occupied.

45 *In their poor praise he*] At their simple praises of him he showed  
 signs of modesty or humility.

50-51 *So in approof . . . royal speech*] His epitaph does not supply  
 such confirmation of his merits as does the speech of the King.

He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,  
 To grow there and to bear, — “ Let me not live,” —  
 This his good melancholy oft began,  
 On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,  
 When it was out, — “ Let me not live,” quoth he,  
 “ After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff  
 Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses 60  
 All but new things disdain ; whose judgements are  
 Mere fathers of their garments ; whose constancies  
 Expire before their fashions.” This he wish'd :  
 I after him do after him wish too,  
 Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,  
 I quickly were dissolved from my hive,  
 To give some labourers room.

SEC. LORD.                                      You are loved, sir ;  
 They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

KING. I fill a place, I know 't. How long is 't, count,  
 Since the physician at your father's died ? 70  
 He was much famed.

BER.                                      Some six months since, my lord.

KING. If he were living, I would try him yet.  
 Lend me an arm ; the rest have worn me out  
 With several applications : nature and sickness  
 Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count ;  
 My son's no dearer.

BER.                                      Thank your majesty.

[*Exeunt. Flourish.*]

59-61 *the snuff* . . . *disdain*] used-up wick, useless cinders, in the sight  
 of younger spirits, whose alert minds disdain all but new things.

66 *dissolved*] separated, cut off, discharged. Cf. *M. Wives*, V, v, 211 :  
 “ Nothing can *dissolve* us.”

SCENE III—ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter* COUNTESS, Steward, and Clown

COUNT. I will now hear ; what say you of this gentlewoman ?

STEW. Madam, the care I have had to even your content, I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours ; for then we wound our modesty and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

COUNT. What does this knave here ? Get you gone, sirrah : the complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe : 't is my slowness that I do not ; for I know you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

CLO. 'T is not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNT. Well, sir.

CLO. No, madam, 't is not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damned : but, if I may have

<sup>3</sup> *to even your content*] to do precisely what you wish.

<sup>4</sup> *calendar*] record.

<sup>6-7</sup> *make foul . . . publish them*] obscure the grounds of our deserts.

Cf. for the general sentiment, *Troil. and Cress.*, I, iii, 241 :

“The worthiness of praise distains his worth,  
If that the praised himself bring the praise forth.”

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. ACT I

---

your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNT. Wilt thou needs be a beggar ?

20

CLO. I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNT. In what case ?

CLO. In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no *heritage* : and I think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o' my body ; for they say barnes are b'lessings.

COUNT. Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

CLO. My poor body, madam, requires it : I am driven on by the flesh ; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNT. Is this all your worship's reason ?

30

CLO. Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

COUNT. May the world know them ?

CLO. I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are ; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent.

COUNT. Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

CLO. I am out o' friends, madam ; and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

COUNT. Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

40

CLO. You're shallow, madam, in great friends ; for

---

18 *to go to the world*] to get married : a common phrase. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 287 : " Thus goes every one to the world but I." *As You Like It*, V, iii, 4 : " A woman of the world " means " a married woman."

23 *Service is no heritage*] A common proverb, with which the speaker associates a reminiscence of *Ps.* cxxvii, 3 : " Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord."

### SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

the knaves come to do that for me, which I am weary of. He that ears my land spares my team, and gives me leave to in the crop; if I be his cuckold, he's my drudge: he that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend: *ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist, how-* 50  
some'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one; they may joul horns together, like any deer i' the herd.

COUNT. Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave?

CLO. A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way:

For I the ballad will repeat,  
Which men full true shall find;  
Your marriage comes by destiny,  
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

60

---

50 *Charbon . . . Poysam*] It has been ingeniously conjectured that these names are formed from the French words "chair bonne" (i. e., good flesh), and "poisson" (i. e., fish), and that reference is made to the Lenten fare characteristic respectively of Puritan and Papist. There is an old French proverb, "Jeune chair et vieil poisson" (meaning that meat is best eaten when the animal is young, fish when old and fat), which may well have suggested the collocation of the words, with their epithets.

57 *the ballad*] Cf. John Grange's *Golden Aphroditis*, 1577:

"As cuckoldes come by destinie,  
So cuckowes sing by kind."

COUNT. Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon.

STEW. May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you: of her I am to speak.

COUNT. Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen I mean.

CLO. Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,

Why the Grecians sacked Troy?

Fond done, done fond,

Was this King Priam's joy?

With that she sighed as she stood,

70

With that she sighed as she stood,

And gave this sentence then;

Among nine bad if one be good,

Among nine bad if one be good,

There's yet one good in ten.

COUNT. What, one good in ten? you corrupt the song, sirrah.

CLO. One good woman in ten, madam; which is a purifying o' the song: would God would serve the world so all the year! we'd find no fault with the tithe-woman, 80 if I were the parson: one in ten, quoth a'! an we might have a good woman born but one every blazing star, or

66 *seq.*] An obvious quotation from some old ballad about the siege of Troy. Cf. "St. George and the Dragon," in Percy's *Reliques*, which opens:

"Of Hector's deeds did Homer sing; and of the sack of stately Troy,  
What griefs fair Helena did bring, which was Sir Paris' only joy."

80 *tithe-woman*] tenth woman. Probably the correct version of the song represented one woman to be bad out of every ten, a ratio which the clown roguishly reverses.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

at an earthquake, 't would mend the lottery well : a man may draw his heart out, ere a' pluck one.

COUNT. You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

CLO. That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done ! Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt ; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am <sup>90</sup> going, forsooth : the business is for Helen to come hither. [Exit.

COUNT. Well, now.

STEW. I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNT. Faith, I do : her father bequeathed her to me ; and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds : there is more owing her than is paid ; and more shall be paid her than she'll demand. 98

STEW. Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she wished me : alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own words to her own ears ; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son : Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates ; Love no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were

---

89-90 *near the surplice . . . black gown*] conform outwardly to the law.

The reference is to the antipathy of the Puritan to the surplice which the law enjoined, and his exclusive devotion to the black gown.



level ; . . . queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surprised, without rescue in the first assault, or ransom afterward. This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in : which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you withal ; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it. 112

COUNT. You have discharged this honestly ; keep it to yourself : many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance, that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you, leave me : stall this in your bosom ; and I thank you for your honest care : I will speak with you further anon.

[*Exit Steward.*]

*Enter HELENA*

Even so it was with me when I was young :

If ever we are nature's, these are ours ; this thorn 120  
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong ;

Our blood to us, this to our blood is born ;  
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,  
Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth :

106 *queen of virgins*] The obvious lacuna in this line evoked Theobald's brilliant emendation, *Diana no queen of virgins*, which is commonly adopted. This reading, which should be compared with line 203 ("your Dian"), implies that "poor knight" (l. 107) is "a poor female votary." This interpretation is fully supported by the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, V, i, 140-144: "O sacred, shadowy, cold, and constant queen . . . who to thy female knights Allow'st no more blood," etc. Cf. *Much Ado*, V, iii, 13, where Hero is called "virgin knight."

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

By our remembrances of days foregone,  
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.  
Her eye is sick on 't : I observe her now.

HEL. What is your pleasure, madam ?

COUNT. You know, Helen,  
I am a mother to you.

HEL. Mine honourable mistress.

COUNT. Nay, a mother : 130  
Why not a mother ? When I said " a mother,"  
Methought you saw a serpent : what 's in " mother,"  
That you start at it ? I say, I am your mother ;  
And put you in the catalogue of those  
That were enwombed mine : 't is often seen  
Adoption strives with nature ; and choice breeds  
A native slip to us from foreign seeds :  
You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,  
Yet I express to you a mother's care :  
God's mercy, maiden ! does it curd thy blood 140  
To say I am thy mother ? What 's the matter,  
That this distemper'd messenger of wet,  
The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye ?  
Why ? that you are my daughter ?

HEL. That I am not.

COUNT. I say, I am your mother.

HEL. Pardon, madam ;  
The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother :  
I am from humble, he from honour'd name ;

---

[42-143] Cf. *Lucrece*, 1586, 1587:

" And round about her tear-distained eye  
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky."

No note upon my parents, his all noble :

My master, my dear lord he is ; and I

His servant live, and will his vassal die :

150

He must not be my brother.

COUNT.

Nor I your mother ?

HEL. You are my mother, madam; would you  
were,—

So that my lord your son were not my brother, —

Indeed my mother ! or were you both our mothers,

I care no more for than I do for heaven,

So I were not his sister. Can't no other,

But I your daughter, he must be my brother ?

COUNT. Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law :

God shield you mean it not ! daughter and mother

So strive upon your pulse. What, pale again ?

160

My fear hath catch'd your fondness: now I see

The mystery of your loneliness, and find

Your salt tears' head : now to all sense 't is gross

You love my son ; invention is ashamed,

Against the proclamation of thy passion,

To say thou dost not : therefore tell me true ;

But tell me then, 't is so ; for, look, thy cheeks

Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes

See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours,

160 *So strive . . . pulse*] So strain, excite your feeling.

162 *loneliness*] Theobald's admirable emendation for the old reading  
*loveliness*.

164-165 *invention . . . passion*] Falsehood would be ashamed to deny the fact in face of the plain avowal you made of your passion.

That in their kind they speak it : only sin 170  
And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,  
That truth should be suspected. Speak, is 't so ?  
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew ;  
If it be not, forswear 't : howe'er, I charge thee,  
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,  
To tell me truly.

HEL. Good madam, pardon me !

COUNT. Do you love my son ?

HEL. Your pardon, noble mistress !

COUNT. Love you my son ?

HEL. Do not you love him, madam ?

COUNT. Go not about ; my love hath in 't a bond,  
Whereof the world takes note : come, come, disclose 180  
The state of your affection ; for your passions  
Have to the full appeach'd.

HEL. Then, I confess,  
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,  
That before you, and next unto high heaven,  
I love your son.

My friends were poor, but honest ; so's my love :  
Be not offended ; for it hurts not him  
That he is loved of me : I follow him not  
By any token of presumptuous suit ;  
Nor would I have him till I do deserve him ; 190  
Yet never know how that desert should be.  
I know I love in vain, strive against hope ;

---

182 *Have . . . appeach'd*] Have given accusatory evidence, have  
"peached," in the slang sense.

Yet, in this captious and intenible sieve,  
 I still pour in the waters of my love,  
 And lack not to lose still : thus, Indian-like,  
 Religious in mine error, I adore  
 The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,  
 But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,  
 Let not your hate encounter with my love  
 For loving where you do : but if yourself,  
 Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,  
 Did ever in so true a flame of liking  
 Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian  
 Was both herself and love ; O, then, give pity  
 To her, whose state is such, that cannot choose  
 But lend and give where she is sure to lose ;  
 That seeks not to find that her search implies,  
 But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies !

200

COUNT. Had you not lately an intent, — speak truly, —  
 To go to Paris ?

193 *captious and intenible sieve*] Both words, in the senses which are required by the context, are not met with elsewhere. "Captious" seems equivalent to "capacious," capable of receiving large quantities ; "intenible" is its antithesis, "incapable of retaining."

197-198 *The sun . . . more*] For other references by Shakespeare to sun-worship cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, i, 116, 117, *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 220, *seq.*, and *Sonnet* vii, 1-4.

201 *Whose aged honour*] Whose honourable conduct in age proves that you were virtuous in youth.

203-204 *your Dian . . . love*] The general meaning is, "The flame of liking" burned so purely in you that the goddess of Chastity (Dian), whom you worshipped, suffered no menace from your passion ; in your case Love and Chastity were at one.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

HEL. Madam, I had.

COUNT. Wherefore ? tell true. 210

HEL. I will tell truth ; by grace itself I swear.  
 You know my father left me some prescriptions  
 Of rare and proved effects, such as his reading  
 And manifest experience had collected  
 For general sovereignty ; and that he will'd me  
 In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,  
 As notes, whose faculties inclusive were,  
 More than they were in note : amongst the rest,  
 There is a remedy, approved, set down,  
 To cure the desperate languishings whereof 220  
 The king is render'd lost.

COUNT. This was your motive  
 For Paris, was it ? speak.

HEL. My lord your son made me to think of this ;  
 Else Paris, and the medicine, and the king,  
 Had from the conversation of my thoughts  
 Haply been absent then.

COUNT. But think you, Helen,  
 If you should tender your supposed aid,  
 He would receive it ? he and his physicians  
 Are of a mind ; he, that they cannot help him,  
 They, that they cannot help : how shall they credit 230  
 A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,

---

215 *For general sovereignty*] To serve as a sovereign remedy of universal application.

217-218 *As notes . . . note*] As prescriptions, whose inherent efficacy was greater than it was reputed to be.

Embowell'd of their doctrine, have left off  
The danger to itself?

HEL. There's something in 't,  
More than my father's skill, which was the great'st  
Of his profession, that his good receipt  
Shall for my legacy be sanctified  
By the luckiest stars in heaven : and, would your honour  
But give me leave to try success, I'd venture  
The well-lost life of mine on his Grace's cure  
By such a day and hour.

COUNT. Dost thou believe 't? 240

HEL. Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNT. Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and  
love,

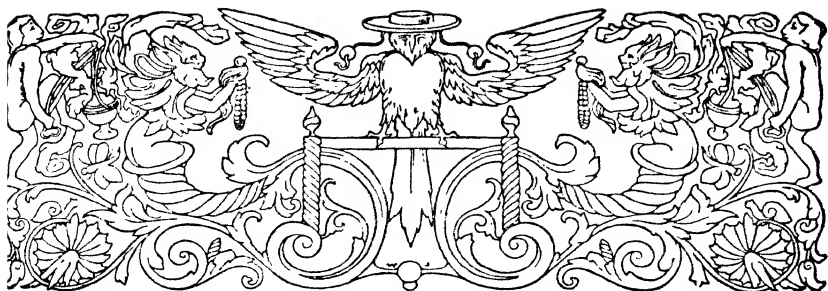
Means and attendants, and my loving greetings  
To those of mine in court : I'll stay at home  
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt :  
Be gone to-morrow ; and be sure of this,  
What I can help thee to, thou shalt not miss. [*Exeunt.*

---

232 *Embowell'd of their doctrine*] Exhausted of their learning.

233-235 *There's something . . . profession, that*] For *in't* Hanmer substitutes *hints* ; but the change, though widely adopted, is needless, if we understand "that" in the common Elizabethan sense of "to the effect that."

238 *success*] issue, result. "Succeeding" is similarly used, II, iii, 189, *infra*.



ACT SECOND—SCENE I—PARIS  
*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING, attended with divers young  
 Lords taking leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM, and  
 PAROLLES*

KING



AREWELL, YOUNG  
 lords; these warlike principles  
 Do not throw from you: and you,  
 my lords, farewell:  
 Share the advice betwixt you; if  
 both gain, all  
 The gift doth stretch itself as 't is  
 received,  
 And is enough for both.

FIRST LORD. 'T is our hope,  
 sir,  
 After well-enter'd soldiers, to  
 return

And find your Grace in health.

KING. No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart

1-2 *young lords . . . my lords*] This is the reading of the First Folio.  
 Hamner proposed to read *lord* in the singular in each case,  
 but the plural is fully justified. The king appears to address him-



Will not confess he owes the malady  
 That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords ; 10  
 Whether I live or die, be you the sons  
 Of worthy Frenchmen : let higher Italy, —  
 Those bated that inherit but the fall  
 Of the last monarchy, — see that you come  
 Not to woo honour, but to wed it ; when  
 The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,  
 That fame may cry you loud : I say, farewell.

SEC. LORD. Health, at your bidding, serve your  
 majesty !

KING. Those girls of Italy, take heed of them :  
 They say, our French lack language to deny, 20  
 If they demand : beware of being captives,  
 Before you serve.

self to two parties of lords, of which one was to fight on the side of Florence, and the other on the side of Sienna. Already — cf. I, ii, 13–15, *supra* — he had given his courtiers leave to “stand on either part” in the Italian strife.

In the First Folio the First Lord is called “Lord G.” and the Second Lord “Lord E.” The same initials are repeated in the case of the two lords who reappear in iii, 2, *infra*, as well as in the case of another pair of French lords who figure in ii, 6, and iv, 3, *infra*. The initials “G” and “E” seem to be those of the actors who filled the parts in early productions of the piece. Goughe, Gilburne, and Ecclestone are mentioned among “the names of the principall actors in all these playes” in a preliminary page of the First Folio.

6 *After well-enter'd soldiers*] After (we have become) well initiated, well-trained soldiers.

12–14 *let higher Italy . . . monarchy*] let upper Italy — let your humbled foemen who inherit merely the decadence of the ended (Roman) empire.

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

BOTH. Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING. Farewell. Come hither to me. [*Exit.*]

FIRST LORD. O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

PAR. 'T is not his fault, the spark.

SEC. LORD. O, 't is brave wars!

PAR. Most admirable: I have seen those wars.

BER. I am commanded here, and kept a coil with "Too young," and "the next year," and "'t is too early."

PAR. An thy mind stand to 't, boy, steal away bravely.

BER. I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock, 30  
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,  
Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn  
But one to dance with! By heaven, I 'll steal away.

FIRST LORD. There 's honour in the theft.

PAR. Commit it, count.

SEC. LORD. I am your accessory; and so, farewell.

BER. I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured body.

FIRST LORD. Farewell, captain.

SEC. LORD. Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

PAR. Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin.  
Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals: you 40  
shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain  
Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on

<sup>27</sup> kept a coil with] pestered with fussy objections to my going.

<sup>30</sup> the forehorse to a smock] the squire of petticoats. The forehorse was the leading horse of a team, and was often pranked out in ribbons.

<sup>32</sup> no sword] Men wore short swords when they danced. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, III, ii, 35-36:

"He at Philippi kept  
His sword e'en like a dancer."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL    ACT II

---

his sinister cheek ; it was this very sword entrenched it : say to him, I live ; and observe his reports for me.

FIRST LORD. We shall, noble captain. [*Exeunt Lords.*]

PAR. Mars dote on you for his novices ! what will ye do ?

BER. Stay : the king.

*Re-enter KING*

PAR. [*Aside to Ber.*] Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords ; you have restrained yourself within the list of too cold an adieu : be more expressive to them : 50 for they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there do muster true gait, eat, speak, and move under the influence of the most received star ; and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be followed : after them, and take a more dilated farewell.

BER. And I will do so.

PAR. Worthy fellows ; and like to prove most sinewy sword-men. [*Exeunt Bertram and Parolles.*]

*Enter LAFEU*

LAF. [*Kneeling*] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

KING. I 'll fee thee to stand up.

60

51-52 *in the cap of the time, . . . move*] in the height of the fashion ; in them is concentrated authentic etiquette in regard to eating, speaking, and moving.

60 *fee*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *see*. The meaning is, " I 'ld reward thee if I could stand up."

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

LAF. Then here's a man stands, that has brought his  
pardon.

I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy ;  
And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING. I would I had ; so I had broke thy pate,  
And ask'd thee mercy for 't.

LAF. Good faith, across : but, my good lord, 't is thus ;  
Will you be cured of your infirmity ?

KING. No.

LAF. O, will you eat no grapes, my royal fox ?  
Yes, but you will my noble grapes, an if 70  
My royal fox could reach them : I have seen a medicine  
That 's able to breathe life into a stone,  
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary  
With spritely fire and motion ; whose simple touch  
Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay,  
To give great Charlemain a pen in 's hand,  
And write to her a love-line.

KING. What " her " is this ?

LAF. Why, Doctor She : my lord, there 's one arrived,  
If you will see her : now, by my faith and honour,  
If seriously I may convey my thoughts 80  
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke  
With one that, in her sex, her years, profession,

66 *across*] Lafeu's meaning is that the king's retort is clumsy. To thrust a lance in a tilting match "across" [the body of] an adversary instead of pushing the point towards him was a sign of awkwardness.

66 *great Charlemain*] There was a tradition that Charlemagne late in life made a vain endeavour to learn to write.

Wisdom and constancy, hath amazed me more  
Than I dare blame my weakness : will you see her,  
For that is her demand, and know her business ?  
That done, laugh well at me.

KING. Now, good Lafeu,  
Bring in the admiration ; that we with thee  
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine  
By wondering how thou took'st it.

LAF. Nay, I'll fit you,  
And not be all day neither. [Exit. 90

KING. Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

*Re-enter LAFEU, with HELENA*

LAF. Nay, come your ways.

KING. This haste hath wings indeed.

LAF. Nay, come your ways ;  
This is his majesty, say your mind to him :  
A traitor you do look like ; but such traitors  
His majesty seldom fears : I am Cressid's uncle,  
That dare leave two together ; fare you well. [Exit.

KING. Now, fair one, does your business follow us ?

HEL. Ay, my good lord.  
Gerard de Narbon was my father ; 100  
In what he did profess, well found.

KING. I knew him.

HEL. The rather will I spare my praises towards him ;

83-84 *Than I dare blame my weakness*] Than I care to admit for fear of  
exposing myself to the reproach of weakness.

96 *Cressid's uncle*] Pandarus, a leading character in Shakespeare's *Troil.*  
and *Cress.*

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death  
 Many receipts he gave me ; chiefly one,  
 Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,  
 And of his old experience the only darling,  
 He bade me store up, as a triple eye,  
 Safer than mine own two, more dear ; I have so :  
 And, hearing your high majesty is touch'd  
 With that malignant cause, wherein the honour 110  
 Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,  
 I come to tender it and my appliance,  
 With all bound humbleness.

KING. We thank you, maiden ;  
 But may not be so credulous of cure,  
 When our most learned doctors leave us, and  
 The congregated college have concluded  
 That labouring art can never ransom nature  
 From her inaidible estate ; I say we must not  
 So stain our judgement, or corrupt our hope,  
 To prostitute our past-cure malady 120  
 To empirics, or to dissever so  
 Our great self and our credit, to esteem  
 A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

HEL. My duty, then, shall pay me for my pains :  
 I will no more enforce mine office on you ;

---

107 *triple eye*] a third eye. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, I, i, 12 : "The *triple* pillar of the world."

121-123 *dissever so . . . deem*] I must not so disjoin my person and place from their fit dignity by setting value on an ignorant offer of help, when I deem my case to be beyond the reach of intelligent assistance.

Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts  
A modest one, to bear me back again.

KING. I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful:  
Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I  
give

As one near death to those that wish him live : 130  
But, what at full I know, thou know'st no part ;  
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HEL. What I can do can do no hurt to try,  
 Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.  
 He that of greatest works is finisher,  
 Oft does them by the weakest minister :  
 So holy writ in babes hath judgement shown,  
 When judges have been babes ; great floods have flown  
 From simple sources ; and great seas have dried,  
 When miracles have by the greatest been denied 140  
 Oft expectation fails, and most oft there  
 Where most it promises ; and oft it hits  
 Where hope is coldest, and despair most fits.

KING. I must not hear thee; fare thee well, kind  
maid;

Thy pains not used must by thyself be paid :  
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HEL. Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd :  
It is not so with Him that all things knows,  
As 't is with us that square our guess by shows ;  
But most it is presumption in us when

150

143 *fols*] Theobald's emendation for the Folio reading *shifts*.

SCENE I    ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

The help of heaven we count the act of men.  
 Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent ;  
 Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.  
 I am not an impostor, that proclaim  
 Myself against the level of mine aim ;  
 But know I think, and think I know most sure,  
 My art is not past power, nor you past cure.

KING. Art thou so confident ? within what space  
 Hopest thou my cure ?

HEL.                                The great'st grace lending grace,  
 Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring                                160  
 Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring ;  
 Ere twice in murk and occidental damp  
 Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp ;  
 Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass  
 Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass ;  
 What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,  
 Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

KING. Upon thy certainty and confidence  
 What darest thou venture ?

HEL.                                Tax of impudence,  
 A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame                                170  
 Traduced by odious ballads : my maiden's name

154-155 *proclaim . . . aim*] make professions which are not in accord  
 with my real intentions. "Level" is not uncommon in the sense  
 of "purpose." Cf. the play of *Stucley*: "That is the end or *levels*  
 of my thought" (Simpson's *School of Shakespeare*, I, 187).

160-161 *bring . . . ring*] carry their fiery torchbearer round his daily  
 circuit or orbit.



Sear'd otherwise, ne worse of worst extended,  
With vilest torture let my life be ended.

KING. Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth  
speak

His powerful sound within an organ weak :  
And what impossibility would slay

In common sense, sense saves another way.

Thy life is dear ; for all, that life can rate

Worth name of life, in thee hath estimate,

Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all

180

That happiness and prime can happy call :

Thou this to hazard needs must intimate

Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.

Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try,

That ministers thine own death if I die.

HEL. If I break time, or flinch in property

Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die,

And well deserved : not helping, death's my fee ;

But, if I help, what do you promise me ?

189

172 *ne worse of worst extended*] This is the reading of the First Folio.

In the Second and later folios *no* was substituted for *ne*. "Ne" usually means "nor," but the meaning seems here to be "nay."

Helena says: "let the worse come to the worst, let untoward fate be strained to the worse degree of what is very bad, — in effect, let me die under vilest torture."

176–177 *And what impossibility . . . another way*] A notion, which, in virtue of its incredibility, is liable to be destroyed by common sense, may survive after all ; perception or sensation has means of preserving a notion in spite of its being rejected by ordinary reason.

180] Theobald proposed to insert *virtue* after *courage*, so as to complete the metre.

186 *flinch in property*] fail in any essential particular.

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

KING. Make thy demand.

HEL. But will you make it even?

KING. Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of  
heaven.

HEL. Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly  
hand

What husband in thy power I will command :

Exempted be from me the arrogance

To choose from forth the royal blood of France,

My low and humble name to propagate

With any branch or image of thy state ;

But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know

Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow

KING. Here is my hand ; the premises observed, 200

Thy will by my performance shall be served :

So make the choice of thy own time ; for I,

Thy resolved patient, on thee still rely.

More should I question thee, and more I must,

Though more to know could not be more to trust,

From whence thou camest, how tended on: but

rest

Unquestion'd welcome, and undoubted blest.

Give me some help here, ho ! If thou proceed

As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.

[*Flourish. Exeunt*

190 *make it even*] give precisely what is asked.

SCENE II — ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter COUNTESS and Clown*

COUNT. Come on, sir ; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

CLO. I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught : I know my business is but to the court.

COUNT. To the court ! why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt ? But to the court !

CLO. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court : he that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap ; and, indeed, such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court ; but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

COUNT. Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all questions.

CLO. It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks, the pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn-buttock, or any buttock.

COUNT. Will your answer serve fit to all questions ?

CLO. As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffeta punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for

<sup>21</sup> *Tib's rush, etc.*] "Tib" and "Tom" were used for "lad" and "lass" much like "Jack" and "Jill." "Tib's rush" means a ring made of a rush, commonly used in rural districts as a love token.

SCENE II    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Shrove Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth, nay, as the pudding to his skin.

COUNT. Have you, I say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?

CLO. From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question. 30

COUNT. It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit all demands.

CLO. But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that belongs to't. Ask me if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

COUNT. To be young again, if we could: I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

CLO. O Lord, sir! There's a simple putting off. 40 More, more, a hundred of them.

COUNT. Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

CLO. O Lord, sir! Thick, thick, spare not me.

COUNT. I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

CLO. O Lord, sir! Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

COUNT. You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

CLO. O Lord, sir! spare not me.

COUNT. Do you cry, "O Lord, sir!" at your whipping, and "spare not me"? Indeed your "O Lord, sir!" is very sequent to your whipping: you would answer 50 very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

CLO. I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my "O Lord, sir!" I see things may serve long, but not serve ever.

COUNT. I play the noble housewife with the time,  
To entertain 't so merrily with a fool.

CLO. O Lord, sir! why, there 't serves well again.

COUNT. An end, sir; to your business. Give Helen  
this,  
And urge her to a present answer back :  
Commend me to my kinsmen and my son :  
This is not much.

60

CLO. Not much commendation to them.

COUNT. Not much employment for you : you understand me ?

CLO. Most fruitfully : I am there before my legs.

COUNT. Haste you again. *[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE III — PARIS

*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Enter* BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

LAF. They say miracles are past ; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we

---

3 *causeless*] Coleridge points out that a cause is only predicable of things natural (phenomena), and that Shakespeare is strictly accurate from a philosophical point of view in describing things super-

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

make trifles of terrors ; ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.

PAR. Why, 't is the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.

BER. And so 't is.

LAF. To be relinquished of the artists, — 10

PAR. So I say ; both of Galen and Paracelsus.

LAF. Of all the learned and authentic fellows, —

PAR. Right ; so I say.

LAF. That gave him out incurable, —

PAR. Why, there 't is ; so say I too.

LAF. Not to be helped, —

PAR. Right ; as 't were, a man assured of a —

LAF. Uncertain life, and sure death.

PAR. Just, you say well ; so would I have said.

LAF. I may truly say, it is a novelty to the world. 20

PAR. It is, indeed : if you will have it in showing, you shall read it in — what do ye call there ?

LAF. A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.

PAR. That 's it ; I would have said the very same.

LAF. Why, your dolphin is not lustier : 'fore me, I speak in respect —

PAR. Nay, 't is strange, 't is very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it ; and he's of a most facinerosus spirit that will not acknowledge it to be the —

---

natural (noumena) as "causeless," *i. e.* without mundane origin or connection with matter.

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

LAF. Very hand of heaven.

30

PAR. Ay, so I say.

LAF. In a most weak —

PAR. And debile minister, great power, great transcendence : which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone the recovery of the king, as to be —

LAF. Generally thankful.

PAR. I would have said it ; you say well. Here comes the king.

*Enter KING, HELENA, and Attendants*

LAF. Lustig, as the Dutchman says : I 'll like a maid the better, whilst I have a tooth in my head : why, he 's 40 able to lead her a coranto.

PAR. Mort du vinaigre ! is not this Helen ?

LAF. 'Fore God, I think so.

KING. Go, call before me all the lords in court.  
Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side ;  
And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense  
Thou hast repeal'd, a second time receive  
The confirmation of my promised gift,  
Which but attends thy naming.

*Enter three or four Lords*

Fair maid, send forth thine eye : this youthful parcel 50  
Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,  
O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice

---

39 *Lustig*] The Dutch word is "Lustigh," meaning lusty, vigorous.  
52 *father's voice*] father's approval. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 54.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

I have to use : thy frank election make ;  
Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

HEL. To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress  
Fall, when Love please ! marry, to each, but one !

LAF. I 'ld give bay Curtal and his furniture,  
My mouth no more were broken than these boys',  
And writ as little beard.

KING. Peruse them well :  
Not one of those but had a noble father.

60

HEL. Gentlemen,  
Heaven hath through me restored the king to health.

ALL. We understand it, and thank heaven for  
you.

HEL. I am a simple maid ; and therein wealthiest,  
That I protest I simply am a maid.  
Please it your majesty, I have done already :  
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,  
“ We blush that thou shouldst choose ; but, be refused,  
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever ;  
We 'll ne'er come there again.”

KING. Make choice ; and, see, 70  
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

HEL. Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly ;  
And to imperial Love, that god most high,  
Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit ?

FIRST LORD. And grant it.

HEL. Thanks, sir ; all the rest is mute.

---

75 *all the rest is mute*] I will say no more. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 380 : “ The rest is silence.”



LAF. I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-  
ace for my life.

HEL. The honour, sir, that flames in your fair  
eyes,

Before I speak, too threateningly replies :

Love make your fortunes twenty times above

80

Her that so wishes and her humble love !

SEC. LORD. No better, if you please.

HEL. My wish receive,  
Which great Love grant ! and so, I take my leave.

LAF. Do all they deny her ? An they were sons of  
mine, I 'ld have them whipped ; or I would send them to  
the Turk, to make eunuchs of.

HEL. Be not afraid that I your hand should take ;  
I 'll never do you wrong for your own sake :

Blessing upon your vows ! and in your bed

Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed !

90

LAF. These boys are boys of ice, they 'll none have  
her : sure, they are bastards to the English ; the French  
ne'er got 'em.

HEL. You are too young, too happy, and too good,  
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

FOURTH LORD. Fair one, I think not so.

LAF. There 's one grape yet ; I am sure thy father

76 *ames-ace*] ambs-ace, the two aces, the lowest throw of the dice, a  
thing of no value. The general meaning of Lafeu's somewhat  
lame irony seems to be, "I had rather be a competitor in this con-  
test than risk my life for nothing at all."

97-99 *I am sure . . . already*] Thy father put some spirit into you ;  
but I know enough of you to know you for an ass.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

drunk wine : but if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen ; I have known thee already.

HEL. [*To Bertram*] I dare not say I take you ; but I give

100

Me and my service, ever whilst I live,  
Into your guiding power. This is the man.

KING. Why, then, young Bertram, take her ; she's thy wife.

BER. My wife, my liege ! I shall beseech your highness,  
In such a business give me leave to use  
The help of mine own eyes.

KING. Know'st thou not, Bertram,  
What she has done for me ?

BER. Yes, my good lord ;  
But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING. Thou know'st she has raised me from my sickly bed.

BER. But follows it, my lord, to bring me down  
Must answer for your raising ? I know her well :  
She had her breeding at my father's charge.  
A poor physician's daughter my wife ! Disdain  
Rather corrupt me ever !

110

KING. 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which  
I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,  
Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,  
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off

113-114 *Disdain . . . ever*] May ignominy or disgrace otherwise taint me for ever.

117 *Of colour, etc.*] As far as colour, etc., are concerned.

In differences so mighty. If she be  
 All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest, 120  
 A poor physician's daughter, thou dislikest  
 Of virtue for the name : but do not so :  
 From lowest place when virtuous things proceed  
 The place is dignified by the doer's deed :  
 Where great additions swell 's and virtue none,  
 It is a dropsied honour. Good alone  
 Is good without a name. Vileness is so :  
 The property by what it is should go,  
 Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair ;  
 In these to nature she 's immediate heir, 130  
 And these breed honour : that is honour's scorn,  
 Which challenges itself as honour's born,  
 And is not like the sire : honours thrive,  
 When rather from our acts we them derive  
 Than our foregoers : the mere word 's a slave  
 Debosh'd on every tomb, on every grave  
 A lying trophy ; and as oft is dumb  
 Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb  
 Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said ?  
 If thou canst like this creature as a maid, 140  
 I can create the rest : virtue and she  
 Is her own dower ; honour and wealth from me.  
 BER. I cannot love her, nor will strive to do 't.  
 KING. Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive  
 to choose.

---

127 *Vileness is so*] Vileness is in the same case.

132 *challenges itself as*] asserts a claim to be.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

HEL. That you are well restored, my lord, I'm glad:  
Let the rest go.

KING. My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,  
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,  
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift;  
That dost in vile misprision shackle up 150  
My love and her desert; that canst not dream,  
We, poisoning us in her defective scale,  
Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know,  
It is in us to plant thine honour where  
We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt:  
Obey our will, which travails in thy good:  
Believe not thy disdain, but presently  
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right  
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;  
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever 160  
Into the staggers and the careless lapse  
Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate  
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,  
Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

147 *which to defeat*] and to destroy this risk of injury to my honour.

150 *in vile misprision shackle up*] contemptibly undervalue or disdain.  
"Misprision" means here "the act of undervaluing" Cf. III. ii,  
29, *infra*, where the countess talks of "the misprising of" Helena  
by her son.

152-153 *We, poisoning . . . beam*] We, throwing the weight of our in-  
fluence in her favour or scale, which of itself were deficient in weight,  
shall make the scale in which you are placed strike the beam,  
*i. e.*, weigh nothing at all.

161 *staggers*] strictly speaking, apoplexy in horses. Here "staggering  
helplessness" or "bewilderment" (of men). Cf. *Cymb.*, V, v, 233:  
"How come these *staggers* on me?"

BER. Pardon, my gracious lord ; for I submit  
 My fancy to your eyes : when I consider  
 What great creation and what dole of honour  
 Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late  
 Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now  
 The praised of the king ; who, so ennobled, 170  
 Is as 't were born so.

KING.                      Take her by the hand,  
 And tell her she is thine : to whom I promise  
 A counterpoise ; if not to thy estate.  
 A balance more replete.

BER.                      I take her hand.

KING. Good fortune and the favour of the king  
 Smile upon this contract ; whose ceremony  
 Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,  
 And be perform'd to-night : the solemn feast  
 Shall more attend upon the coming space,  
 Expecting absent friends. As thou lovest her, 180  
 Thy love's to me religious ; else, does err.

[*Exeunt all but Lafew and Parolles.*]

LAF. Do you hear, monsieur ? a word with you.

PAR. Your pleasure, sir ?

LAF. Your lord and master did well to make his re-  
 cantation.

---

178 *Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief*] Shall rightly follow immediately on the short and summary engagement. "Brief" here means "a short" verbal assurance. Cf. V, iii, 137, *infra*, "a sweet verbal *brief*."

179-180 *Shall more attend . . . friends*] shall take place at a longer interval hereafter, awaiting the coming of absent friends.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. Recantation ! My lord ! my master !

LAF. Ay ; is it not a language I speak ?

PAR. A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master !

LAF. Are you companion to the Count Rousillon ? 190

PAR. To any count, to all counts, to what is man.

LAF. To what is count's man : count's master is of another style.

PAR. You are too old, sir ; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

LAF. I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man ; to which title age cannot bring thee.

PAR. What I dare too well do, I dare not do. 198

LAF. I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow ; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel ; it might pass : yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burthen. I have now found thee ; when I lose thee again, I care not : yet art thou good for nothing but taking up ; and that thou 'rt scarce worth.

---

189 *succeeding*] sequel, result, issue. "Success" is similarly used. I, i, 138, *supra*.

196 *I write man*] I declare myself a man. Cf. III, v, 63, *infra* : "*I write good creature*."

199 *for two ordinaries*] for two dinners, for the time spent over two dinners with you.

205 *taking up*] There is a play here on the two meanings of this expression "buying on credit" and "contradicting or exposing error in conversation."

PAR. Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee, —

LAF. Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if — Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well: thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand. 212

PAR. My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

LAF. Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

PAR. I have not, my lord, deserved it.

LAF. Yes, good faith, every dram of it; and I will not bate thee a scruple.

PAR. Well, I shall be wiser. 218

LAF. Ev'n as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack o' the contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf and beaten, thou shalt find what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge, that I may say in the default, he is a man I know.

PAR. My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

LAF. I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and my poor doing eternal: for doing I am past; as I will by thee, in what motion age will give me leave. [*Exit.* 228

PAR. Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me; scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must be

210 *a hen*] a coward. Cf. "hen-hearted," "chicken-hearted."

*window of lattice*] a window with a blind that may be seen through.

227-228 *for doing . . . leave*] My time of doing or action is past, so I will pass by thee (*i. e.* leave thee) as quickly as age permits. There is a lame quibble on "past" as a participle of "pass."

SCENE III    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

patient; there is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have of — I'll beat him, an if I could but meet him again.

*Re-enter LAFEU*

LAF. Sirrah, your lord and master's married: there's news for you: you have a new mistress.

PAR. I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs: he is my good lord: whom I serve above is my master. 240

LAF. Who? God?

PAR. Ay, sir.

LAF. 'The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o' this fashion? dost make hose of thy sleeves? do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee: methinks't, thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee: I think thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee. 250

PAR. This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

LAF. Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond, and no true traveller: you are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you. [*Exit.*



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

PAR. Good, very good ; it is so then : good, very good ; let it be concealed awhile.

*Re-enter BERTRAM*

BER. Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever ! 260

PAR. What 's the matter, sweet-heart ?

BER. Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,  
I will not bed her.

PAR. What, what, sweet-heart ?

BER. O my Parolles, they have married me !  
I 'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

PAR. France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits  
The tread of a man's foot : to the wars !

BER. There 's letters from my mother : what the  
import is, I know not yet. 270

PAR. Ay, that would be known. To the wars, my  
boy, to the wars !

He wears his honour in a box unseen,  
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,  
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,  
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet  
Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions  
France is a stable ; we that dwell in 't jades ;  
Therefore, to the war !

BER. It shall be so : I 'll send her to my house,  
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her, 280  
And wherefore I am fled ; write to the king  
That which I durst not speak : his present gift  
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields,

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Where noble fellows strike : war is no strife  
To the dark house and the detested wife.

PAR. Will this capriccio hold in thee, art sure ?

BER. Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.  
I'll send her straight away : to-morrow  
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

PAR. Why, these balls bound ; there's noise in it.

'T is hard :

290

A young man married is a man that's marr'd :

Therefore away, and leave her bravely ; go :

The king has done you wrong : but, hush, 't is so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — PARIS

THE KING'S PALACE

*Enter HELENA and Clown*

HEL. My mother greets me kindly : is she well ?

CLO. She is not well ; but yet she has her health :  
she's very merry ; but yet she is not well : but thanks  
be given, she's very well and wants nothing i' the world ;  
but yet she is not well.

HEL. If she be very well, what does she ail, that she's  
not very well ?

285 *To the dark house, etc.*] Compared with the gloomy home and  
the hated wife. *Detested* is Rowe's correction for *detected* of the  
Folios.

290 *Why, these balls . . . hard*] Proverbial expressions meaning "This  
goes well."

CLO. Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HEL. What two things?

CLO. One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send <sup>10</sup> her quickly! the other, that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly!

*Enter PAROLLES*

PAR. Bless you, my fortunate lady!

HEL. I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortunes.

PAR. You had my prayers to lead them on; and to keep them on, have them still. O, my knave, how does my old lady?

CLO. So that you had her wrinkles, and I her money, I would she did as you say. 20

PAR. Why, I say nothing.

CLO. Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing: to say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title; which is within a very little of nothing.

PAR. Away! thou'rt a knave.

CLO. You should have said, sir, before a knave thou'rt a knave; that's, before me thou'rt a knave: this had been truth, sir. 30

PAR. Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

CLO. Did you find me in yourself, sir? or were you taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable; and

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.

PAR. A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.  
Madam, my lord will go away to-night ;  
A very serious business calls on him.  
The great prerogative and rite of love,  
Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge ; 40  
But puts it off to a compell'd restraint ;  
Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets,  
Which they distil now in the curbed time,  
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy,  
And pleasure drown the brim.

HEL.. What 's his will else ?

PAR. That you will take your instant leave o' the  
king,  
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,  
Strengthen'd with what apology you think  
May make it probable need.

HEL. What more commands he?

PAR. That, having this obtain'd, you presently  
Attend his further pleasure.

HEL. In every thing I wait upon his will.

PAR. I shall report it so.

HEL. I pray you. [*Exit Parolles.*] Come, sirrah.

[*Exeunt.*

43 *curbed time*] the season of restraint.

<sup>49</sup> *make it probable need*] give it a specious appearance of necessity.

SCENE V — PARIS

*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM*

LAF. But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

BER. Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

LAF. You have it from his own deliverance.

BER. And by other warranted testimony.

LAF. Then my dial goes not true: I took this lark for a bunting.

BER. I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge, and accordingly valiant.

LAF. I have then sinned against his experience and transgressed against his valour; and my state that way<sup>10</sup> is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes: I pray you, make us friends; I will pursue the amity.

*Enter PAROLLES*

PAR. These things shall be done, sir.      [*To Bertram.*]

LAF. Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

PAR. Sir?

LAF. O, I know him well, I, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman, a very good tailor.

---

6 a *bunting*] a bird with plumage resembling that of a lark, but without the lark's note.

SCENE V      ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

BER. Is she gone to the king?      [*Aside to Parolles.*

PAR. She is.

20

BER. Will she away to-night?

PAR. As you'll have her.

BER. I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,  
Given order for our horses; and to-night,  
When I should take possession of the bride,  
End ere I do begin.

LAF. A good traveller is something at the latter end of  
a dinner; but one that lies three thirds, and uses a known  
truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should be once  
heard, and thrice beaten. God save you, captain.      30

BER. Is there any unkindness between my lord and  
you, monsieur?

PAR. I know not how I have deserved to run into my  
lord's displeasure.

LAF. You have made shift to run into 't, boots and  
spurs and all, like him that leaped into the custard; and  
out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer question for  
your residence.

BER. It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

LAF. And shall do so ever, though I took him at 's 40  
prayers. Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of  
me, there can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of

---

36 *leaped into the custard*] At the Lord Mayor's banquets in the city  
of London, the city fool was wont to leap into a custard prepared  
for the purpose. Cf. Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*, I, i, 95-97:

“He may perchance, in tale of a Sheriff's dinner,  
Skip with a rime o' the Table, from New-Nothing,  
And take his *Almaine-leap* into a custard.”

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

this man is his clothes. Trust him not in matter of heavy consequence ; I have kept of them tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur : I have spoken better of you than you have or will to deserve at my hand ; but we must do good against evil. [Exit.

PAR. An idle lord, I swear.

BER. I think so.

PAR. Why, do you not know him ?

50

BER. Yes, I do know 'him well, and common  
speech

Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

*Enter HELENA*

HEL. I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,  
Spoke with the king, and have procured his leave  
For present parting ; only he desires  
Some private speech with you.

BER. I shall obey his will.  
You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,  
Which holds not colour with the time, nor does  
The ministration and required office  
On my particular. Prepared I was not  
For such a business ; therefore am I found  
So much unsettled : this drives me to entreat you,  
That presently you take your way for home,  
And rather muse than ask why I entreat you ;  
For my respects are better than they seem,

60

---

60 *On my particular*] On my part, as far as I am concerned.

65 *respects*] reasons, motives.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

And my appointments have in them a need  
Greater than shows itself at the first view  
To you that know them not. This to my mother :  
[Giving a letter.

'T will be two days ere I shall see you ; so,  
I leave you to your wisdom.

HEL. Sir, I can nothing say, 70  
But that I am your most obedient servant.

BER. Come, come, no more of that.

HEL. And ever shall  
With true observance seek to eke out that  
Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd  
To equal my great fortune.

BER. Let that go:  
My haste is very great: farewell; hie home.

HEL. Pray, sir, your pardon.

BER. Well, what would you say?

HEL. I am not worthy of the wealth I owe ;  
Nor dare I say 't is mine, and yet it is ;  
But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal  
What law does vouch mine own.

BER. What would you have?

HEL. Something; and scarce so much: nothing,  
indeed.

I would not tell you what I would, my lord: faith,  
yes;

Strangers and foes do sunder, and not kiss.

BER. I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

HEL. I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL    ACT II

BER. Where are my other men, monsieur ? Farewell !

[*Exit Helena.*]

Go thou toward home ; where I will never come,  
Whilst I can shake my sword, or hear the drum.  
Away, and for our flight.

PAR. Bravely, coragio ! [*Exeunt.* 90

87 *Where are my other, etc.*] Theobald first gave this speech to Bertram. In the earlier editions it is assigned to Helena.

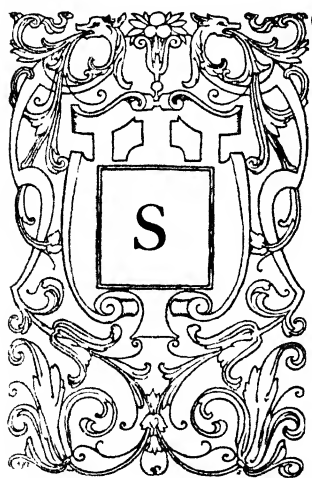


## ACT THIRD — SCENE I — FLORENCE

### THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, attended ; the two Frenchmen  
with a troop of soldiers*

DUKE



SO THAT FROM POINT  
to point now have you heard  
The fundamental reasons of this  
war,

Whose great decision hath much  
blood let forth  
And more thirsts after.

FIRST LORD. Holy seems the  
quarrel

Upon your Grace's part ; black  
and fearful  
On the opposer.

DUKE. Therefore we marvel  
much our cousin France  
Would in so just a business shut his bosom  
Against our borrowing prayers.

SEC. LORD.

Good my lord,

<sup>9</sup> *borrowing prayers*] prayers that would borrow of him assistance.

The reasons of our state I cannot yield, 10  
 But like a common and an outward man,  
 That the great figure of a council frames  
 By self-unable motion : therefore dare not  
 Say what I think of it, since I have found  
 Myself in my incertain grounds to fail  
 As often as I guess'd.

DUKE.                                Be it his pleasure.

FIRST LORD. But I am 'sure the younger of our  
                                  nature,  
 That surfeit on their ease, will day by day  
 Come here for physic.

DUKE.                                Welcome shall they be ;  
 And all the honours that can fly from us 20  
 Shall on them settle. You know your places well ;  
 When better fall, for your avails they fell :  
 To-morrow to the field. [Flourish.

---

10-13 *The reasons . . . motion*] I know nothing of politics, except,  
 like any ordinary outsider, who forms some idea of what the great  
 councillors determine by effort, which of itself is inadequate to  
 attain full knowledge. "Self-unable motion" is "mental or  
 physical activity which is not self-sufficing, and bears no fruit.

17 *younger of our nature*] young men of our rank or condition.

22 *When . . . fell*] When men in higher positions fall, their fall  
 must be to your advantage ; you know the usual conditions of  
 promotion.

SCENE II — ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter* COUNTESS and Clown

COUNT. It hath happened all as I would have had it, save that he comes not along with her.

CLO. By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

COUNT. By what observance, I pray you?

CLO. Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

COUNT. Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come. [Opening a letter.]

CLO. I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court: our old ling and our Isbels o' the country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o' the court: the brains of my Cupid's knocked out, and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

7 *the ruff*] Here used of the boot, the top edge of which often had an ornamental ruff or ruffle. Cf. Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, IV, 2, *ad fin*, "*the ruffle* of my boot."

13 *old ling*] literally, "stale salt fish, which was ordinary Lenten fare." The words may here be applied to old women. Such usage adds very little point to the clown's contrast of women of the court with those of the country. It has been ingeniously suggested that, both in this and the next line, *old ling* is a misreading of *codlings*, i. e. "raw youths."

COUNT. What have we here ?

CLO. E'en that you have there. [Exit.

COUNT. [*reads*] I have sent you a daughter-in-law : she hath recovered the king, and undone me. I have wedded her, not bed-<sup>20</sup>ded her ; and sworn to make the "not" eternal. You shall hear I am run away : know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.  
Your unfortunate son,

BERTRAM.

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy,  
To fly the favours of so good a king ;  
To pluck his indignation on thy head  
By the misprising of a maid too virtuous  
For the contempt of empire.

30

*Re-enter Clown*

CLO. O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady !

COUNT. What is the matter ?

CLO. Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort ; your son will not be killed so soon as I thought he would.

COUNT. Why should he be killed ?

CLO. So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does : the danger is in standing to 't ; that's the loss of men, though it be the getting of children. Here they<sup>40</sup> come will tell you more : for my part, I only hear your son was run away. [Exit.

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<sup>29</sup> *misprising*] contemning. See note on ii, 3, 150, *supra*.

SCENE II    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

*Enter HELENA and two Gentlemen*

FIRST GENT. Save you, good madam.

HEL. Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

SEC. GENT. Do not say so.

COUNT. Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen,  
I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief,  
That the first face of neither, on the start,  
Can woman me unto 't : where is my son, I pray you ?

SEC. GENT. Madam, he's gone to serve the duke of  
Florence :

50

We met him thitherward ; for thence we came,  
And, after some dispatch in hand at court,  
Thither we bend again.

HEL. Look on his letter, madam ; here's my passport.  
[reads] When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which never  
shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I  
am father to, then call me husband : but in such a "then" I write  
a "never."

This is a dreadful sentence.

COUNT. Brought you this letter, gentlemen ?

FIRST GENT. Ay, madam ; 60

And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pains.

COUNT. I prithee, lady, have a better cheer ;  
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,  
Thou robb'st me of a moiety : he was my son ;

---

43 *First Gent.*] In the First Folio this character is called "French E,"  
and the "Second Gent." is called "French G." See note on II, i,  
1-2, *supra*.

49 *Can woman me unto 't :*] Can make me womanlike give way to  
emotion.

**ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL    ACT III**

But I do wash his name out of my blood,  
And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he?

SEC. GENT. Ay, madam.

COUNT. And to be a soldier?

SEC. GENT. Such is his noble purpose ; and, believe 't,  
The Duke will lay upon him all the honour  
That good convenience claims.

COUNT.                 · Return you thither?      70

FIRST GENT. Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

HEL. [*reads*] Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.  
'Tis bitter.

COUNT. Find you that there?

HEL. Ay, madam.

FIRST GENT. 'Tis but the boldness of his hand, haply,  
which his heart was not consenting to.

COUNT. Nothing in France, until he have no wife!  
There's nothing here that is too good for him  
But only she; and she deserves a lord  
That twenty such rude boys might tend upon  
And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him?

FIRST GENT. A servant only, and a gentleman  
Which I have sometime known.

COUNT. Parolles, was it not?

FIRST GENT. Ay, my good lady, he.

COUNT. A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.  
My son corrupts a well-derived nature  
With his inducement.

87 *With his inducement*] Under his influence.

FIRST GENT.        Indeed, good lady,  
The fellow has a deal of that too much,  
Which holds him much to have.

COUNT. Y' are welcome, gentlemen. 90  
I will entreat you, when you see my son,  
To tell him that his sword can never win  
The honour that he loses: more I'll entreat you  
Written to bear along.

SEC. GENT.        We serve you, madam,  
In that and all your worthiest affairs.

COUNT. Not so, but as we change our courtesies.  
Will you draw near?        [*Exeunt Countess and Gentlemen.*]

HEL. "Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France."  
Nothing in France, until he has no wife!  
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France; 100  
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is 't I  
That chase thee from thy country and expose  
Those tender limbs of thine to the event  
Of the none-sparing war? and is it I  
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou  
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark  
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,

88-89 *The fellow . . . have*] "Too much" seems to be used as a substantive in the sense of "excess" (of vanity). Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 117-118: "For goodness, growing to a pluriſy, Dies in his own *too much*. The meaning may be, "The fellow has a deal of that excess (of vanity) which gives him the repute of possessing an amplitude or sufficiency (of valour)." But the difficult phrase "holds him much to have" is usually reckoned to be corrupt.

The suggestion "fouls him," etc., is worth attention.  
96 *change our courtesies*] exchange or reciprocate civilities.



That ride upon the violent speed of fire,  
 Fly with false aim ; move the still-peering air,  
 That sings with piercing ; do not touch my lord. 110  
 Whoever shoots at him, I set him there ;  
 Whoever charges on his forward breast,  
 I am the caitiff that do hold him to 't ;  
 And, though I kill him not, I am the cause  
 His death was so effected : better 't were  
 I met the ravin lion when he roar'd  
 With sharp constraint of hunger ; better 't were  
 That all the miseries which nature owes  
 Were mine at once. No, come thou home, Rousillon,  
 Whence honour but of danger wins a scar, 120  
 As oft it loses all : I will be gone ;  
 My being here it is that holds thee hence :  
 Shall I stay here to do 't ? no, no, although  
 The air of paradise did fan the house,  
 And angels officed all : I will be gone,  
 That pitiful rumour may report my flight.  
 To console thine ear. Come, night ; end, day !  
 For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away. [*Erit.*]

109-110 *the still-peering air . . . lord*] "Disturb or cut through the still, quiet air, which makes a singing or hissing sound as the bullet pierces it ; (take any course, do anything, but) do not touch my lord." "Still-peering" is an emphatic amplification of "still," *i. e.* quiet. "Peer" is frequently used for "appear," or "seen." The epithet is equivalent to "still seeming," "silent to all appearance."

119-121 *come . . . all*] come home from that place where the quest of honour gets at most out of a dangerous adventure nothing but a scar, while it as often loses everything.

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

SCENE III — FLORENCE

## BEFORE THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, Soldiers, Drum, and Trumpets*

DUKE. The general of our horse thou art ; and we,  
Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence  
Upon thy promising fortune.

BER. Sir, it is  
A charge too heavy for my strength ; but yet  
We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake  
To the extreme edge of hazard.

DUKE. Then go thou forth;  
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,  
As thy auspicious mistress!

BER. This very day,  
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file:  
Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove 10  
A lover of thy drum, hater of love. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — ROUSILLON

## THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter* COUNTESS *and* Steward

COUNT. Alas! and would you take the letter of her? Might you not know she would do as she has done, By sending me a letter? Read it again.

STEW. [*reads*] I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone :

Ambitious love hath so in me offended,  
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,  
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.

Write, write, that from the bloody course of war

My dearest master, your dear son, may hie :

Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far 10

His name with zealous fervour sanctify :

His taken labours bid him me forgive ;

I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth

From courtly friends with camping foes to live,

Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth :

He is too good and fair for death and me ;

Whom I myself embrace to set him free.

COUNT. Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest  
words !

Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much,

As letting her pass so : had I spoke with her, 20

I could have well diverted her intents,

Which thus she hath prevented.

STEW.

Pardon me, madam :

If I had given you this at over-night,

She might have been o'erta'en ; and yet she writes,

Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNT.

What angel shall

Bless this unworthy husband ? he cannot thrive,

---

4 *Saint Jaques' pilgrim*] Shakespeare invented the reference to Saint Jaques (Saint James the Greater), but gives no precise indication as to which of the many shrines of the saint Helena pretends to make pilgrimage. She subsequently calls the saint "Jaques le Grand" and "great Saint Jaques," III, v, 31 and 92, *infra*.

Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear  
And loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath  
Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,  
To this unworthy husband of his wife ; 30  
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth  
That he does weigh too light : my greatest grief,  
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.  
Dispatch the most convenient messenger :  
When haply he shall hear that she is gone,  
He will return ; and hope I may that she,  
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,  
Led hither by pure love : which of them both  
Is dearest to me, I have no skill in sense  
To make distinction : provide this messenger : 40  
My heart is heavy and mine age is weak ;  
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V — FLORENCE. WITHOUT THE WALLS

## A TUCKET AFAR OFF

*Enter an old Widow of Florence, DIANA, VIOLENTA, and MARIANA,  
with other Citizens*

WID. Nay, come ; for if they do approach the city,  
we shall lose all the sight.

DIA. They say the French count has done most  
honourable service.

3 DIA. *They say, etc.*] The Cambridge editors assign this speech to  
Violenta, who, though mentioned in the stage direction, does not  
figure among the speakers in the old editions.

WID. It is reported that he has taken their greatest commander ; and that with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother. [*Tucket.*] We have lost our labour ; they are gone a contrary way : hark ! you may know by their trumpets.

MAR. Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this 10 French earl : the honour of a maid is her name ; and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

WID. I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited by a gentleman his companion.

MAR. I know that knave ; hang him ! one Parolles : a filthy officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl. Beware of them, Diana ; their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of lust, are not the things they go under : many a maid hath been seduced by them ; and the misery is, example, that so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for 20 all that dissuade succession, but that they are limed with the twigs that threaten them. I hope I need not to advise you further ; but I hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

DIA. You shall not need to fear me.

WID. I hope so.

---

19 *go under*] pass for, profess to be.

21 *dissuade succession*] dissuade from following the same track.

22 *limed with the twigs*] ensnared with the twigs, as in hunting wild animals. Cf. *infra*, III, vi, 97.

SCENE V    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

*Enter HELENA, disguised like a Pilgrim*

Look, here comes a pilgrim : I know she will lie at my house ; thither they send one another : I'll question her.  
God save you, pilgrim ! whither are you bound ? 30

HEL. To Saint Jaques le Grand.

Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you ?

WID. At the Saint Francis here beside the port.

HEL. Is this the way ?

WID. Ay, marry, is 't. [*A march afar.*] Hark you !  
they come this way.

If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,

But till the troops come by,

I will conduct you where you shall be lodged ;

The rather, for I think I know your hostess

As ample as myself.

HEL. Is it yourself ? 40

WID. If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HEL. I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

WID. You came, I think, from France ?

HEL. I did so.

WID. Here you shall see a countryman of yours  
That has done worthy service.

HEL. His name, I pray you ?

DIA. The Count Rousillon : know you such a one ?

HEL. But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him :  
His face I know not.

DIA. Whatsome'er he is,

40 *ample*] fully, well.



And brokes with all that can in such a suit  
 Corrupt the tender honour of a maid :  
 But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard  
 In honestest defence.

70

MAR. The gods forbid else !

WID. So, now they come :

*Drum and Colours*

*Enter BERTRAM, PAROLIES, and the whole army*

That is Antonio, the Duke's eldest son ;  
 That, Escalus.

HEL. Which is the Frenchman ?

DIA. He ;

That with the plume : 't is a most gallant fellow.  
 I would he loved his wife : if he were honest  
 He were much goodlier : is't not a handsome gentle-  
 man ?

HEL. I like him well.

DIA. 'T is pity he is not honest : yond's that same  
 knave

That leads him to these places : were I his lady,  
 I would poison that vile rascal.

80

HEL. Which is he ?

DIA. That jack-an-apes with scarfs : why is he mel-  
 ancholy ?

HEL. Perchance he's hurt i' the battle.

PAR. Lose our drum ! well.

---

68 *brokes*] trades, acts as broker or pander.



MAR. He's shrewdly vexed at something: look, he has spied us.

WID. Marry, hang you!

MAR. And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

[*Exeunt Bertram, Parolles, and army.*]

WID. The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you

90

Where you shall host: of enjoin'd penitents  
There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,  
Already at my house.

HEL. I humbly thank you:  
Please it this matron and this gentle maid  
To eat with us to-night, the charge and thanking  
Shall be for me; and, to requite you further,  
I will bestow some precepts of this virgin  
Worthy the note.

BOTH. We'll take your offer kindly. [*Exeunt.*]

# SCENE VI—CAMP BEFORE FLORENCE

*Enter BERTRAM and the two French Lords*

SEC. LORD. Nay, good my lord, put him to 't; let him have his way.

FIRST LORD. If your lordship find him not a hilding, hold me no more in your respect.

89 *ring-carrier*] pander, bawd.

91 *enjoin'd penitents*] persons under a vow of doing penance.

1 *Sec. Lord*] In the First Folio this character is called "Cap. F." and the "First Lord" is called "Cap. G." See note on II, i, 1-2, *supra*.

SCENE VI ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SEC. LORD. On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BER. Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

SEC. LORD. Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge, without any malice, but to speak of him as my kinsman, he's a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of no <sup>10</sup> one good quality worthy your lordship's entertainment.

FIRST LORD. It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath not, he might at some great and trusty business in a main danger fail you.

BER. I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

FIRST LORD. None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

SEC. LORD. I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprise him; such I will have, whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy: we will bind and hood-<sup>20</sup> wink him so, that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries, when we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship present at his examination: if he do not, for the promise of his life and in the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgement in any thing.

FIRST LORD. O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum; he says he has a stratagem for't: <sup>30</sup>

when your lordship sees the bottom of his success in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

*Enter PAROLLES*

SEC. LORD. [*Aside to Ber.*] O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of his design: let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

BER. How now, monsieur! this drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

FIRST LORD. A pox on't, let it go; 't is but a drum. 40

PAR. "But a drum"! is't "but a drum"? A drum so lost! There was excellent command, — to charge in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend our own soldiers!

FIRST LORD. That was not to be blamed in the command of the service: it was a disaster of war that Cæsar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

BER. Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success: some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to be recovered. 50

---

33 *give him John Drum's entertainment*] give him a good beating. The phrase is common. Cf. Edward Aston's translation of Boemus' *Manners and Customs of all Nations*, 1511: "some others on the contrarie part, give them *John Drum's intertainm<sup>t</sup>* reviling and beating them away from their houses."

37 *in any hand*] in any case, at any rate.

SCENE VI    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. It might have been recovered.

BER. It might ; but it is not now.

PAR. It is to be recovered : but that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have that drum or another, or “*hic jacet.*”

BER. Why, if you have a stomach, to 't, monsieur : if you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprise and go on ; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit : if you speed well in 60 it, the Duke shall both speak of it, and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness.

PAR. By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BER. But you must not now slumber in it.

PAR. I'll about it this evening : and I will presently pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself into my mortal preparation ; and by midnight look to hear further from me.

BER. May I be bold to acquaint his Grace you are 70 gone about it ?

PAR. I know not what the success will be, my lord ; but the attempt I vow.

BER. I know thou 'rt valiant ; and, to the possibility of thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAR. I love not many words. [Exit.

SEC. LORD. No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems

---

67 *dilemmas*] the various difficulties of the undertaking.

to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done ; damns himself to do, and dares better be damned 80 than to do 't ?

FIRST LORD. You do not know him, my lord, as we do : certain it is, that he will steal himself into a man's favour and for a week escape a great deal of discoveries ; but when you find him out, you have him ever after.

BER. Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of this that so seriously he does address himself unto ?

SEC. LORD. None in the world ; but return with an invention, and clap upon you two or three probable lies : bu' we have almost embossed him ; you shall see 90 his fall to-night ; for indeed he is not for your lordship's respect.

FIRST LORD. We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him. He was first smoked by the old lord Lafeu : when his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him ; which you shall see this very night.

SEC. LORD. I must go look my twigs : he shall be caught.

BER. Your brother he shall go along with me.

SEC. LORD. As 't please your lordship : I'll leave you.

[Exit.

---

90 *embossed*] used of a hunted animal driven to extremities. Cf. Spenser, *Fairy Queen*, III, i, 21 : "The savage beast *embossed* in weary chase."

97 *I must go look my twigs*. Cf. III, v, 22, *supra* : "They are limed [*i. e.* ensnared] with the *twigs*."

SCENE VII ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

BER. Now will I lead you to the house, and show you  
The lass I spoke of. 100

FIRST LORD. But you say she's honest.

BER. That's all the fault : I spoke with her but once  
And found her wondrous cold ; but I sent to her,  
By this same coxcomb that we have i' the wind,  
Tokens and letters which she did re-send ;  
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature :  
Will you go see her ?

FIRST LORD. With all my heart, my lord.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII—FLORENCE

*THE WIDOW'S HOUSE*

*Enter HELENA and Widow*

HEL. If you misdoubt me that I am not she,  
I know not how I shall assure you further,  
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

WID. Though my estate be fallen, I was well born,  
Nothing acquainted with these businesses ;  
And would not put my reputation now  
In any staining act.

HEL. Nor would I wish you.  
First, give me trust, the count he is my husband,  
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken  
Is so from word to word ; and then you cannot, 10

---

3 *But I . . . upon*] Unless I forfeit my present aim (which is to conceal my identity from Bertram).

By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,  
Err in bestowing it.

WID.                    I should believe you ;  
For you have show'd me that which well approves  
You're great in fortune.

HEL.                    Take this purse of gold,  
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,  
Which I will over-pay and pay again  
When I have found it: The count he wooes your  
                         daughter,

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,  
Resolved to carry her: let her in fine consent,  
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.  
Now his important blood will nought deny  
That she'll demand: a ring the county wears,  
That downward hath succeeded in his house  
From son to son, some four or five descents  
Since the first father wore it: this ring he holds  
In most rich choice; yet in his idle fire,  
To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,  
Howe'er repented after.

20

WID.                    Now I see  
The bottom of your purpose.

HEL. You see it lawful, then: it is no more,  
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,  
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;  
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,

30

21 *important blood*] importunate blood. Cf. *Lear*, IV, iv, 26, "*important tears*."

Herself most chastely absent : after this,  
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns  
To what is past already.

WID. I have yielded :  
Instruct my daughter how she shall persevere,  
That time and place with this deceit so lawful  
May prove coherent. Every night he comes  
With musics of all sorts and songs composed  
To her unworthiness : it nothing steads us  
To chide him from our eaves ; for he persists  
As if his life lay on 't.

40

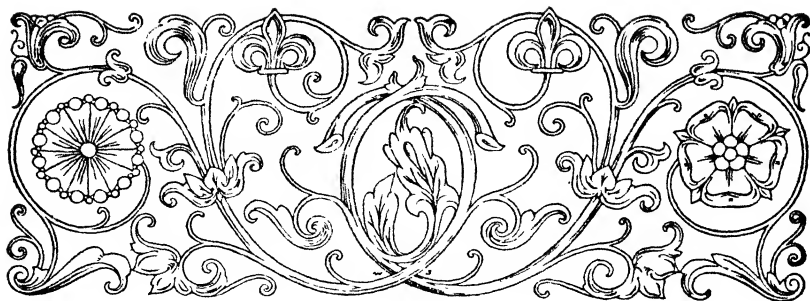
HEL. Why then to-night  
Let us essay our plot ; which, if it speed,  
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,  
And lawful meaning in a lawful act,  
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact :  
But let 's about it.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

47 *both . . . a sinful fact*] both parties are free from sin ; and yet the deed is rendered sinful by the attendant deception and mystification.





## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I

### WITHOUT THE FLORENTINE CAMP

*Enter Second French Lord, with five or six other Soldiers in ambush*

SECOND LORD



WE CAN COME NO other way but by this hedge-corner. When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will: though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to understand him, unless some one among us whom we must produce for an interpreter.

FIRST SOLD. Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

SEC. LORD. Art not acquainted with him? knows he not thy voice?

FIRST SOLD. No, sir, I warrant you.

10

SEC. LORD. But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?

SCENE I    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

FIRST SOLD. E'en such as you speak to me.

SEC. LORD. He must think us some band of strangers i' the adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs' language. gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes, to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

*Enter PAROLLES*

PAR. Ten o'clock: within these three hours 't will be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it: they begin to smoke me; and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

SEC. LORD. This is the first truth that e'er thine own 30 tongue was guilty of.

PAR. What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in

11 *linsey-woolsey*] gibberish. Cf. l. 19, *infra*: "choughs' language, gabble enough."

29 *not daring*] putting no reliance in.

exploit : yet slight ones will not carry it ; they will say, " Came you off with so little ? " and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance ? Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth, and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into 40 these perils.

SEC. LORD. Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is ?

PAR. I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

SEC. LORD. We cannot afford you so.

PAR. Or the baring of my beard ; and to say it was in stratagem.

SEC. LORD. 'T would not do.

PAR. Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripped.

SEC. LORD. Hardly serve.

PAR. Though I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel — 50

SEC. LORD. How deep ?

PAR. Thirty fathom.

SEC. LORD. Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

---

40 *mule*] This is the old reading, for which *mule* was substituted by Hanmer. Cf. *Hen. V.* I, ii, 231-232 : " our grave, Like Turkish *mute*, shall have a tongueless mouth." But " *mule* " is often used as a synonym for " *dumbness*," and may well stand. The general meaning seems to be that Parolles will have to give his tongue away to a chattering butterwoman, and get another that won't speak at all, if his tongue be likely to get him into more difficulties of the kind that he is now experiencing. No other precise reference to " *Bajazet's mule* " or to " *Bajazet's mute* " has been found.

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. I would I had any drum of the enemy's: I would swear I recovered it.

SEC. LORD. You shall hear one anon.

PAR. A drum now of the enemy's, — [*Alarum within.* 60

SEC. LORD. Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

ALL. Cargo, cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.

PAR. O, ransom, ransom! do not hide mine eyes.

[*They seize and blindfold him.*

FIRST SOLD. Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAR. I know you are the Muskos' regiment;  
And I shall lose my life for want of language:  
If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch,  
Italian, or French, let him speak to me; I'll  
Discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

FIRST SOLD. Boskos vauvado: I understand thee, 70  
and can speak thy tongue. Kerelybonto, sir, betake  
thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy  
bosom.

PAR. O!

FIRST SOLD. O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania  
dulche.

SEC. LORD. Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

FIRST SOLD. The general is content to spare thee yet;  
And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on  
To gather from thee: haply thou mayst inform  
Something to save thy life.

PAR. O, let me live! 80  
And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,  
Their force, their purposes; nay, I'll speak that  
Which you will wonder at.

FIRST SOLD.                      But wilt thou faithfully ?

PAR. If I do not, damn me.

FIRST SOLD. Acordo linta.

Come on ; thou art granted space.

*[Exit, with Parolles guarded.    A short alarm within.]*

SEC. LORD. Go, tell the Count Rousillon, and my brother,

We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled

Till we do hear from them.

SEC. SOLD.                      Captain, I will.

SEC. LORD. A' will betray us all unto ourselves :                      90

Inform on that.

SEC. SOLD. So I will, sir.

SEC. LORD. Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.                      *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II — FLORENCE

THE WIDOW'S HOUSE

*Enter BERTRAM and DIANA*

BER. They told me that your name was Fontibell.

DIA. No, my good lord, Diana.

BER.                                      Titled goddess ;

And worth it, with addition ! But, fair soul,

In your fine frame hath love no quality ?

If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,

You are no maiden, but a monument :

When you are dead, you should be such a one  
 As you are now, for you are cold and stern ;  
 And now you should be as your mother was  
 When your sweet self was got.

10

DIA. She then was honest.

BER. So should you be.

DIA. No :

My mother did but duty ; such, my lord,  
 As you owe to your wife.

BER. No more o' that ;

I prithee, do not strive against my vows :  
 I was compell'd to her ; but I love thee  
 By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever  
 Do thee all rights of service.

DIA. Ay, so you serve us  
 Till we serve you ; but when you have our roses,  
 You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves,  
 And mock us with our bareness.

BER. How have I sworn ! 20

DIA. 'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,  
 But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.  
 What is not holy, that we swear not by,  
 But take the High'st to witness : then, pray you, tell me,  
 If I should swear by Jove's great attributes,  
 I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths,  
 When I did love you ill ? This has no holding,  
 To swear by him whom I protest to love,

---

14 *my vows*] my vows to renounce my wife.

19 *barely*] in their bareness.

27-29 *When I did . . . work against him*] When I loved you to your







Have the like oaths: he had sworn to marry me  
 When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie with him  
 When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,  
 Marry that will, I live and die a maid:  
 Only in this disguise I think 't no sin  
 To cozen him that would unjustly win. [Exit.]

SCENE III—THE FLORENTINE CAMP

*Enter the two French Lords and some two or three Soldiers*

FIRST LORD. You have not given him his mother's letter?

SEC. LORD. I have delivered it an hour since: there is something in 't that stings his nature; for on the reading it he changed almost into another man.

FIRST LORD. He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady.

SEC. LORD. Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the king, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you. 10

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73 *braid*] deceitful, tricky. The adjective is unknown elsewhere. A substantive "braid" is often found in the sense of trick. Cf. Greene's *Never too Late* (1592): "love's *braids*" (*i. e.* deceits). "Braidieness," *i. e.* deceitfulness, appears in Montgomerie, *Poems*, 1600.

1 *First Lord*] In the Folios the "First Lord" is called "Cap. G," and the Second Lord "Cap. E." See note II, i, 1-2, *supra*.

### SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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FIRST LORD. When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

SEC. LORD. He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste renown ; and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour : he hath given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

FIRST LORD. Now, God delay our rebellion ! as we are ourselves, what things are we !

SEC. LORD. Merely our own traitors. And as in the <sup>20</sup> common course of all treasons, we still see them reveal themselves, till they attain to their abhorred ends, so he that in this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself.

FIRST LORD. Is it not meant damnable in us, to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents ? We shall not then have his company to-night ?

SEC. LORD. Not till after midnight ; for he is dieted to his hour.

FIRST LORD. That approaches apace : I would gladly <sup>30</sup>

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17 *composition*] compact.

18 *God delay our rebellion*] God retard or mitigate our tendency to rebel, or sin. Cf. *infra*, "Natural *rebellion* done i' the blaze of youth," V, iii, 6. "Delay" has often the sense of "allay."

22 *till they attain to their abhorred ends*] till they reach or reap their ignominious punishments.

23-24 *in his . . . o'erflows himself*] blabs his secrets in his own stream (of talk), "reveals himself."

28-29 *he is dieted to his hour*] he has food or work prescribed for him within the appointed hour. Diana has bidden him remain with her "but an hour," IV, ii, 57, *supra*.

have him see his company anatomized, that he might take a measure of his own judgements, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit.

SEC. LORD. We will not meddle with him till he come ; for his presence must be the whip of the other.

FIRST LORD. In the meantime, what hear you of these wars ?

SEC. LORD. I hear there is an overture of peace.

FIRST LORD. Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

SEC. LORD. What will Count Rousillon do then ? 40  
will he travel higher, or return again into France ?

FIRST LORD. I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether of his council.

SEC. LORD. Let it be forbid, sir ; so should I be a great deal of his act.

FIRST LORD. Sir, his wife some two months since fled from his house : her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand ; which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she accomplished ; and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief ; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and 40  
now she sings in heaven.

SEC. LORD. How is this justified ?

FIRST LORD. The stronger part of it by her own letters, which makes her story true, even to the point of her death : her death itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place.

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33 *counterfeit*] false coin, impostor.

41 *higher*] further inland.

SCENE III    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SEC. LORD. Hath the count all this intelligence ?

FIRST LORD. Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from point, to the full arming of the verity.

SEC. LORD. I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of <sup>60</sup> this.

FIRST LORD. How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses !

SEC. LORD. And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears ! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.

FIRST LORD. The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together : our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not ; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues. <sup>70</sup>

*Enter a Messenger*

How now ! where's your master !

SERV. He met the Duke in the street, sir, of whom he hath taken a solemn leave : his lordship will next morning for France. The Duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the king.

SEC. LORD. They shall be no more than needful there, if they were more than they can commend.

FIRST LORD. They cannot be too sweet for the king's tartness. Here's his lordship now.

*Enter BERTRAM*

How now, my lord ! is 't not after midnight ?

80

BER. I have to-night dispatched sixteen businesses, a

FIRST SOLD. Shall I set down your answer so?

PAR. Do: I'll take the sacrament on't, how and which way you will. 131

BER. All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this!

FIRST LORD. You're deceived, my lord: this is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist, — that was his own phrase, — that had the whole theoric of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the chape of his dagger.

SEC. LORD. I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword clean, nor believe he can have every thing in him by wearing his apparel neatly.

FIRST SOLD. Well, that's set down. 140

PAR. Five or six thousand horse, I said, — I will say true, — or thereabouts, set down, for I'll speak truth.

FIRST LORD. He's very near the truth in this.

BER. But I con him no thanks for 't, in the nature he delivers it.

PAR. Poor rogues, I pray you, say.

FIRST SOLD. Well, that's set down.

PAR. I humbly thank you, sir: a truth's a truth, the rogues are marvellous poor.

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] Demand of him, of what strength they are a-foot. What say you to that? 151

135-136 *the whole theoric . . . dagger*] "Theorique (*i. e.* theory) and practice of warre" is a phrase commonly met with, and is the title of a book translated from the Spanish by Sir Edward Hoby (1597). The "chape" of the dagger was correctly the metal point at the end of the scabbard, but here seems used for the scabbard itself.

PAR. By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty; Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred and fifty each; mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred and fifty each: so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake the snow from off their cassocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces. 160

BER. What shall be done to him?

FIRST LORD. Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my condition, and what credit I have with the Duke.

FIRST SOLD. Well, that's set down. [*Reads*] You shall demand of him, whether one Captain Dumain be i' the camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the Duke; what his valour, honesty, and expertness in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt. What say you to this? what do you know of it?

PAR. I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories: demand them singly. 171

FIRST SOLD. Do you know this Captain Dumain?

PAR. I know him: a' was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the shrieve's fool with child, — a dumb innocent, that could not say him nay.

---

174 *shrieve's fool*] Here an idiot woman in charge of the sheriff, who was official guardian of all imbeciles.

BER. Nay, by your leave, hold your hands ; though I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

FIRST SOLD. Well, is this captain in the Duke of Florence's camp ?

PAR. Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy. 180

FIRST LORD. Nay, look not so upon me ; we shall hear of your lordship anon.

FIRST SOLD. What is his reputation with the Duke ?

PAR. The Duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine ; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' the band : I think I have his letter in my pocket.

FIRST SOLD. Marry, we'll search.

PAR. In good sadness, I do not know ; either it is there, or it is upon a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent.

FIRST SOLD. Here 't is ; here's a paper : shall I read it to you ? 191

PAR. I do not know if it be it or no.

BER. Our interpreter does it well.

FIRST. LORD. Excellently.

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] Dian, the count 's a fool, and full of gold, —

PAR. That is not the Duke's letter, sir ; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurements of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish : I pray you, sir, put it up again. 200

FIRST SOLD. Nay, I'll read it first, by your favour.

177 *next tile that falls*] a figurative expression for "sudden death."

188 *in good sadness*] in all seriousness.

SCENE III    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. My meaning in 't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid ; for I knew the young count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds.

BER. Damnable both-sides rogue !

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it ;

After he scores, he never pays the score :

Half won is match well made ; match, and well make it ;

He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before ;

210

And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this,

Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss :

For count of this, the count 's a fool, I know it,

Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.

Thine, as he vowed to thee in thine ear,

PAROLLES.

BER. He shall be whipped through the army with this rhyme in 's forehead.

SEC. LORD. This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist and the armipotent soldier.

220

PAR. I could endure any thing before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me.

FIRST SOLD. I perceive, sir, by the general's looks, we shall be fain to hang you.

PAR. My life, sir, in any case : not that I am afraid to die ; but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the remainder of nature : let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i' the stocks, or any where, so I may live.

FIRST SOLD. We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely ; therefore, once more to this Captain



Dumain : you have answered to his reputation with the Duke and to his valour : what is his honesty ? 232

PAR. He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister : for rapes and ravishments he parallels Nessus : he professes not keeping of oaths ; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules : he will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool : drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk ; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bed-clothes about him ; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty : he has every thing that an honest man should not have ; what an honest man should have, he has nothing. 243

FIRST LORD. I begin to love him for this.

BER. For this description of thine honesty ? A pox upon him for me, he's more and more a cat.

FIRST SOLD. What say you to his expertness in war ?

PAR. Faith, sir, has led the drum before the English tragedians ; to belie him, I will not, and more of his soldiership I know not ; except, in that country he had the honour to be the officer at a place there called Mile-end, to instruct for the doubling of files : I would do the man what honour I can, but of this I am not certain. 253

FIRST LORD. He hath out-villained villany so far, that the rarity redeems him.

---

233 *steal, sir, an egg . . . cloister*] steal anything, however trifling, from any place however holy. It is possible that "egg" is used here for a young girl. The term is applied to a child in *Macbeth*, IV, ii, 82.

251-252 *Mile-end*] The drilling ground of the London train bands.

BER. A pox on him, he's a cat still.

FIRST SOLD. His qualities being at this poor price, I need not to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

PAR. Sir, for a quart d'écu he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

261

FIRST SOLD. What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

SEC. LORD. Why does he ask him of me?

FIRST SOLD. What's he?

PAR. E'en a crow o' the same nest; not altogether so great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil: he excels his brother for a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best that is: in a retreat he out-runs any lackey; marry, in coming on he has the cramp.

270

FIRST SOLD. If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray the Florentine?

PAR. Ay, and the captain of his horse, Count Rousillon.

FIRST SOLD. I'll whisper with the general, and know his pleasure.

PAR. [*Aside*] I'll no more drumming; a plague of all drums! Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the count,

---

260-261 *cut the entail . . . perpetually*] give absolute possession in perpetuity, by freeing the estate of all other claims.

269 *lackey*] running footman.

have I run into this danger. Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken ? 280

FIRST SOLD. There is no remedy, sir, but you must die : the general says, you that have so traitorously discovered the secrets of your army and made such pestiferous reports of men very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use ; therefore you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

PAR. O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death !

FIRST SOLD. That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends. [Unblinding him.

So, look about you : know you any here ? 290

BER. Good morrow, noble captain.

SEC. LORD. God bless you, Captain Parolles.

FIRST LORD. God save you, noble captain.

SEC. LORD. Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu ? I am for France.

FIRST LORD. Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon ? an I were not a very coward, I 'ld compel it of you : but fare you well. [Exit Bertram and Lords.

FIRST SOLD. You are undone, captain, all but your scarf ; that has a knot on 't yet. 301

PAR. Who cannot be crushed with a plot ?

FIRST SOLD. If you could find out a country where but women were that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fair ye well, sir ; I am for France too : we shall speak of you there.

[Exit, with Soldiers.

SCENE IV    ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. Yet am I thankful : if my heart were great,  
'T would burst at this. Captain I'll be no more ;  
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft  
As captain shall : simply the thing I am 310  
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,  
Let him fear this, for it will come to pass  
That every braggart shall be found an ass.  
Rust, sword ! cool, blushes ! and, Parolles, live  
Safest in shame ! being fool'd, by foolery thrive !  
There's place and means for every man alive.  
I'll after them. [Exit.

SCENE IV — FLORENCE

*THE WIDOW'S HOUSE*

*Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA*

HEL. That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd  
you,  
One of the greatest in the Christian world  
Shall be my surety ; 'fore whose throne 't is needful,  
Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel :  
Time was, I did him a desired office,  
Dear almost as his life ; which gratitude  
Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,  
And answer, thanks : I duly am inform'd  
His Grace is at Marseilles ; to which place

---

9 *Marseilles*] pronounced as a trisyllable. *Marsellis* is the reading of  
the Second and Third Folios.

We have convenient convoy. You must know, 10  
I am supposed dead : the army breaking,  
My husband hies him home ; where, heaven aiding,  
And by the leave of my good lord the king,  
We 'll be before our welcome.

WID. Gentle madam,  
You never had a servant to whose trust  
Your business was more welcome.

HEL. Nor you, mistress,  
Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour  
To recompense your love : doubt not but heaven  
Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,  
As it hath fated her to be my motive 20  
And helper to a husband. But, O strange men !  
That can such sweet use make of what they hate,  
When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts  
Defiles the pitchy night : so lust doth play  
With what it loathes for that which is away.  
But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,  
Under my poor instructions yet must suffer  
Something in my behalf.

DIA. Let death and honesty  
Go with your impositions, I am yours  
Upon your will to suffer.

HEL. Yet, I pray you : 30

11 *breaking*] disbanding.

19-20 *dower . . . motive*] Both words are here used, in conformity with  
a common Elizabethan usage, in a personal significance, *viz.* : giver  
of dower, and supplier of motion, *i. e.* the mover or instrument.

30 *Yet*] For a while. Cf. 27, *supra*, "*yet* must suffer."

## SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

But with the word the time will bring on summer,  
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,  
And be as sweet as sharp. We must away ;  
Our waggon is prepared, and time revives us :  
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL : still the fine 's the  
crown ;  
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown. [Exeunt.

### SCENE V — ROUSILLON

#### THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter* COUNTESS, LAFEU, and Clown

LAF. No, no, no, your son was misled with a snipt-taffeta fellow there, whose villanous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughy youth of a nation in his colour : your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more advanced by the king than by that red-tailed humble-bee I speak of.

COUNT. I would I had not known him ; it was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature

---

31 *with the word*] immediately ; as soon as the word is spoken, or promise given.

35 *All's well that ends well, etc.*] A common proverb. "The fine 's the crown" translates the Latin proverb "*finis coronat opus*."

2 *saffron*] Saffron was commonly used in the colouring of pastry. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iii, 44 : "I must have *saffron* to colour the *warden pies*." Saffron was also a popular dye for both men and women's dress. Reference is here made to both uses of the colouring matter, of which the tinge easily infects its environment.

had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother, I could not have owed her a more rooted love. 11

LAF. 'T was a good lady, 't was a good lady : we may pick a thousand salads ere we light on such another herb.

CLO. Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace.

LAF. They are not herbs, you knave ; they are nose-herbs.

CLO. I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir ; I have not much skill in grass.

LAF. Whether dost thou profess thyself, a knave or 20 a fool ?

CLO. A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

LAF. Your distinction ?

CLO. I would cozen the man of his wife and do his service.

LAF. So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

CLO. And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

LAF. I will subscribe for thee, thou art both knave and fool.

CLO. At your service. 30

LAF. No, no, no.

CLO. Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are.

15 *herb of grace*] rue.

16 *nose-herbs*] herbs to be smelled, not eaten.

28 *I will subscribe for thee*] I'll warrant thee.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

LAF. Who 's that ? a Frenchman ?

CLO. Faith, sir, a' has an English name ; but his fis-  
nomy is more hotter in France than there.

LAF. What prince is that ?

CLO. The black prince, sir ; alias, the prince of dark-  
ness ; alias, the devil.

LAF. Hold thee, there's my purse : I give thee not 40  
this to suggest thee from thy master thou talkest of ;  
serve him still.

CLO. I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a  
great fire ; and the master I speak of ever keeps a good  
fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the world ; let his  
nobility remain in 's court. I am for the house with the  
narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to  
enter : some that humble themselves may ; but the many  
will be too chill and tender, and they 'll be for the flowery  
way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

LAF. Go thy ways, I begin to be aweary of thee ; and 50  
I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with  
thee. Go thy ways : let my horses be well looked to,  
without any tricks.

CLO. If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be  
jades' tricks ; which are their own right by the law of  
nature. [Exit.

LAF. A shrewd knave and an unhappy.

COUNT. So he is. My lord that 's gone made himself

---

35 *name*] Rowe's satisfactory emendation of the First Folio *maine*.

56 *A shrewd knave and an unhappy*] A roguish knave, and one that  
causes ill-hap or bad luck.



much sport out of him : by his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness ; and, indeed, he has no pace, but runs where he will. 60

LAF. I like him well ; 't is not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the king my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter ; which, in the minority of them both, his majesty, out of a self-gracious remembrance, did first propose : his highness hath promised me to do it : and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it ?

COUNT. With very much content, my lord ; and I 70 wish it happily effected.

LAF. His highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he numbered thirty : he will be here to-morrow, or I am deceived by him that in such intelligence hath seldom failed.

COUNT. It rejoices me, that I hope I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here to-night : I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me till they meet together.

LAF. Madam, I was thinking with what manners I 80 might safely be admitted.

COUNT. You need but plead your honourable privilege.

LAF. Lady, of that I have made a bold charter ; but I thank my God it holds yet.

---

60 *he has no pace*] he has no prescribed rule of conduct.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

*Re-enter Clown*

CLO. O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet on's face: whether there be a scar under't or no, the velvet knows; but 't is a goodly patch of velvet: his left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

LAF. A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery of honour; so belike is that.

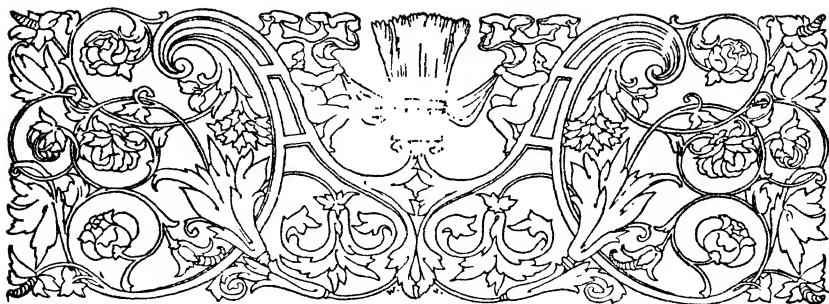
CLO. But it is your carbonadoed face.

LAF. Let us go see your son, I pray you: I long to talk with the young noble soldier.

CLO. Faith, there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine hats and most courteous feathers, which bow the head and nod at every man. [*Exeunt.*

---

88-89 *two pile and a half*] a reference to the quality of the velvet of which the patch was made. Three piled velvet was the best quality. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, I, ii, 32: "Thou art good velvet; thou'rt a *three piled* piece."

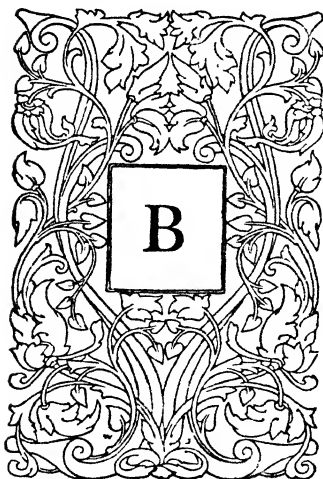


# ACT FIFTH — SCENE 1 — MARSEILLES

## A STREET

*Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA, with two Attendants*

HELENA



UT THIS EXCEEDING  
posting day and night.  
Must wear your spirits low ; we  
cannot help it :  
But since you have made the  
days and nights as one,  
To wear your gentle limbs in my  
affairs,  
Be bold you do so grow in my  
requital  
As nothing can unroot you. In  
happy time ;

*Enter a Gentleman*

This man may help me to his majesty's ear,  
If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

5, 6 *Be bold . . . unroot you*] Be assured that the claims on my recognition are growing so great that nothing can cancel them.

6 *Enter a Gentleman*] This is Rowe's emendation of the First Folio

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

GENT. And you.

HEL. Sir, I have seen you in the court of France. 10

GENT. I have been sometimes there.

HEL. I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen  
From the report that goes upon your goodness ;  
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,  
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to  
The use of your own virtues, for the which  
I shall continue thankful.

GENT. What's your will ?

HEL. That it will please you  
To give this poor petition to the king,  
And aid me with that store of power you have 20  
To come into his presence.

GENT. The king's not here.

HEL. Not here, sir !

GENT. Not, indeed :  
He hence removed last night and with more haste  
Than is his use.

WID. Lord, how we lose our pains !

HEL. ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL yet,  
Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.  
I do beseech you, whither is he gone ?

GENT. Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon ;  
Whither I am going.

HEL. I do beseech you, sir,

---

reading, *Enter a gentle Astringer (i. e. falconer)*, a reading which  
the text fails to justify.

14 *goaded . . . occasions*] incited by most pressing needs.

Since you are like to see the king before me, 30  
Commend the paper to his gracious hand,  
Which I presume shall render you no blame  
But rather make you thank your pains for it.  
I will come after you with what good speed  
Our means will make us means.

GENT.                        This I'll do for you.

HEL. And you shall find yourself to be well  
thank'd,  
Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again.  
Go, go, provide. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — ROUSILLON

*BEFORE THE COUNT'S PALACE*

*Enter Clown, and PAROLLES, following*

PAR. Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this letter : I have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes ; but I am now, sir, muddled in fortune's mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

CLO. Truly, fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell so strongly as thou speakest of: I will henceforth eat no fish of fortune's buttering. Prithee, allow the wind.

PAR. Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir ; I  
spake but by a metaphor. 10

CLO. Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop

## SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

my nose ; or against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get thee further.

PAR. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

CLO. Foh ! prithee, stand away : a paper from fortune's close-stool to give to a nobleman ! Look, here he comes himself.

*Enter LAFEU*

Here is a purr of fortune's, sir, or of fortune's cat, — but not a musk-cat, — that has fallen into the unclean fish-pond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddled 20 withal : pray you, sir, use the carp as you may ; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my similes of comfort and leave him to your lordship. *[Exit.*

PAR. My lord, I am a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched.

LAF. And what would you have me to do ? 'Tis too late to pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with fortune, that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady and would not have knaves 30 thrive long under her ? There's a quart d'écu for you : let the justices make you and fortune friends : I am for other business.

---

18 *purr of fortune's . . . cat*] Parolles' speech is contemptuously compared to the murmurings of a cat.

23 *smiles*] Theobald's emendation of the First Folio reading *smiles*. "Unsavoury *smiles*" is misprinted "unsavoury *smiles*" in the older editions in 1 *Hen. IV*, I, ii, 77.

PAR. I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

LAF. You beg a single penny more : come, you shall ha't ; save your word.

PAR. My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

LAF. You beg more than "word," then. Cox my passion ! give me your hand. How does your drum ? 40

PAR. O my good lord, you were the first that found me !

LAF. Was I, in sooth ? and I was the first that lost thee.

PAR. It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out.

LAF. Out upon thee, knave ! dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil ? One brings thee in grace and the other brings thee 48 out. [*Trumpets sound.*] The king's coming ; I know by his trumpets. Sirrah, inquire further after me ; I had talk of you last night : though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat ; go to, follow.

PAR. I praise God for you. [*Exeunt.*]

---

39 *more than "word"*] an obvious quibble on the fact that "Parolles" (*i. e.* paroles) is the plural of the French parole (*i. e.* word).

SCENE III — ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Flourish.* Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, *the two French Lords,*  
*with Attendants*

KING. We lost a jewel of her ; and our esteem  
Was made much poorer by it : but your son,  
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know  
Her estimation home.

COUNT. 'T is past, my liege ;  
And I beseech your majesty to make it  
Natural rebellion, done i' the blaze of youth ;  
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,  
O'erbears it and burns on.

KING. My honour'd lady,  
I have forgiven and forgotten all ;  
Though my revenges were high bent upon him, 10  
And watch'd the time to shoot.

LAF. This I must say,  
But first I beg my pardon, the young lord  
Did to his majesty, his mother and his lady  
Offence of mighty note ; but to himself  
The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife

---

1 *our esteem*] the esteem in which we held the world at large, or  
things in general.

3-4 *know . . . home*] thoroughly appreciate her worth.

6 *blaze*] Theobald's emendation of the reading of the Folios, *blade*.



Whose beauty did astonish the survey  
Of richest eyes, whose words all ears took captive,  
Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve  
Humbly call'd mistress.

KING. Praising what is lost  
Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither ; 20  
We are reconciled, and the first view shall kill  
All repetition : let him not ask our pardon ;  
The nature of his great offence is dead,  
And deeper than oblivion we do bury  
The incensing relics of it : let him approach,  
A stranger, no offender ; and inform him  
So 't is our will he should.

GENT. I shall, my liege. [Exit.

KING. What says he to your daughter ? have you  
spoke ?

LAF. All that he is hath reference to your highness.

KING. Then shall we have a match. I have letters  
sent me 30  
That set him high in fame.

*Enter BERTRAM*

LAF. He looks well on 't.

KING. I am not a day of season,

17 *richest eyes*] eyes that have seen most beauty. Cf. *As You Like It*,

IV, i, 21-22: "To have seen much . . . is to have *rich eyes*."

25 *incensing relics*] surviving details capable of incensing us.

29 *All . . . highness*] He refers himself entirely, wholly submits to  
your highness.

32 *a day of season*] a seasonable day, in which the weather is all of  
the same character.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail  
In me at once: but to the brightest beams  
Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth;  
The time is fair again.

BER. My high-repented blames,  
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

KING. All is whole;  
Not one word more of the consumed time.  
Let's take the instant by the forward top;  
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees 40  
The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time  
Steals ere we can effect them. You remember  
The daughter of this lord?

BER. Admiringly, my liege, at first  
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart  
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue:  
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,  
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,  
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;  
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stolen; 50  
Extended or contracted all proportions  
To a most hideous object: thence it came  
That she whom all men praised and whom myself,  
Since I have lost, have loved, was in mine eye  
The dust that did offend it.

KING. Well excused:

---

48 *perspective*] a glass or sort of telescope that distorts the object to which it is directed. Cf. *Rich. II.* II, ii, 18-19: "Like *perspectives*, which, rightly gazed upon, Show nothing but confusion."

That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away  
 From the great compt : but love that comes too late,  
 Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,  
 To the great sender turns a sour offence,  
 Crying "That 's good that 's gone." Our rash faults    60  
 Make trivial price of serious things we have,  
 Not knowing them until we know their grave :  
 Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,  
 Destroy our friends and after weep their dust :  
 Our own love waking cries to see what 's done,  
 While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.  
 Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.  
 Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin :  
 The main consents are had ; and here we'll stay  
 To see our widower's second marriage-day.    70

COUNT. Which better than the first, O dear heaven,  
 bless !

Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse !

LAF. Come on, my son, in whom my house's name  
 Must be digested, give a favour from you  
 To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,  
 That she may quickly come. [Bertram gives a ring.] By  
 my old beard,  
 And every hair that 's on 't, Helen, that 's dead,

---

66 *While . . . afternoon*] On the other hand, downright shameful hate (incapable of love's remorse) goes on enjoying its habitual afternoon slumbers unconcerned by any havoc that it may have worked.

72 *cesse*] the old spelling of "cease," retained here for the sake of the rhyme.

74 *digested*] incorporated.

SCENE III    ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Was a sweet creature : such a ring as this,  
The last that e'er I took her leave at court,  
I saw upon her finger.

BER.                                Hers it was not. 80

KING. Now, pray you, let me see it ; for mine eye,  
While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to 't.  
This ring was mine ; and, when I gave it Helen,  
I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood  
Necessitied to help, that by this token  
I would relieve her. Had you that craft, to reave her  
Of what should stead her most ?

BER.                                My gracious sovereign,  
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,  
The ring was never hers.

COUNT.                            Son, on my life,  
I have seen her wear it ; and she reckon'd it 90  
At her life's rate.

LAF.                                I am sure I saw her wear it.

BER. You are deceived, my lord ; she never saw it :  
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,  
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name  
Of her that threw it : noble she was, and thought  
I stood engaged : but when I had subscribed  
To mine own fortune and inform'd her fully  
I could not answer in that course of honour  
As she had made the overture, she ceased

---

79 *The last*] The last time.

96-97 *I stood engaged . . . fortune*] I stood engaged to her ; but when  
I had formally given my consent to what my fortune required.

In heavy satisfaction and would never  
Receive the ring again. 100

KING. Plutus himself,  
That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,  
Hath not in nature's mystery more science  
Than I have in this ring: 't was mine, 't was Helen's,  
Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know  
That you are well acquainted with yourself,  
Confess 't was hers, and by what rough enforcement  
You got it from her: she call'd the saints to surety  
That she would never put it from her finger,  
Unless she gave it to yourself in bed, 110  
Where you have never come, or sent it us  
Upon her great disaster.

BER. She never saw it.

KING. Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;  
And makest conjectural fears to come into me,  
Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove  
That thou art so inhuman, — 't will not prove so; —  
And yet I know not: thou didst hate her deadly,  
And she is dead; which nothing, but to close  
Her eyes myself, could win me to believe,  
More than to see this ring. Take him away. 120

[*Guards seize Bertram.*]

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,

100 *In heavy satisfaction*] Sorrowfully admitting that she was satisfied (of my obligation elsewhere).

102 *tinct and multiplying medicine*] the alchemical tincture or elixir which multiplies gold by transmuting into it other metals.

121-123 *My fore-past proofs . . . little*] However the matter turn



and I follow him to his country for justice : grant it me, O king !  
in you it best lies ; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor maid  
is undone. DIANA CAPILET.

LAF. I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll  
for this : I'll none of him.

KING. The heavens have thought well on thee, Lafeu,  
To bring forth this discovery. Seek these suitors :  
Go speedily and bring again the count. 150  
I am afraid the life of Helen, lady,  
Was foully snatch'd.

COUNT. Now, justice on the doers !

*Re-enter BERTRAM, guarded*

KING. I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to  
you,  
And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,  
Yet you desire to marry.

*Enter Widow and DIANA*

What woman 's that ?

DIA. I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,  
Derived from the ancient Capilet :  
My suit, as I do understand, you know,  
And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

WID. I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour 160

---

146 *toll*] pay toll for him, like the purchaser of a horse at a fair ; come  
honestly by him.

154 *swear them lordship*] swear (in the marriage service) to become  
their lords.

KING. Come hither, count; do you know these women?

BER. My lord, I neither can nor will deny  
But that I know them: do they charge me further?

DIA. Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

BER. She 's none of mine, my lord.

DIA. If you shall marry,  
 You give away this hand, and that is mine ;  
 You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine ;  
 You give away myself, which is known mine ;  
 For I by vow am so embodied yours,  
 That she which marries you must marry me,  
 Either both or none.

LAF. Your reputation comes too short for my daughter; you are no husband for her.

BER. My lord, this is a fond and desperate creature,  
Whom sometime I have laugh'd with : let your highness  
Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour  
Than for to think that I would sink it here.

KING. Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend  
Till your deeds gain them : fairer prove your honour 181  
Than in my thought it lies.

DIA. Good my lord,  
Ask him upon his oath, if he does think  
He had not my virginity.

KING. What say'st thou to her?

162 *both . . . remedy*] both shall perish, unless you give the remedy.



BER. She 's impudent, my lord,  
And was a common gamester to the camp.

DIA. He does me wrong, my lord ; if I were so,  
He might have bought me at a common price :  
Do not believe him. O, behold this ring,  
Whose high respect and rich validity 190  
Did lack a parallel ; yet for all that  
He gave it to a commoner o' the camp,  
If I be one.

COUNT. He blushes, and 't is it :  
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem,  
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,  
Hath it been owed and worn. This is his wife ;  
That ring 's a thousand proofs.

KING. Methought you said  
You saw one here in court could witness it.

DIA. I did, my lord, but loath am to produce  
So bad an instrument : his name 's Parolles. 200

LAF. I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

KING. Find him, and bring him hither.

*[Exit an Attendant.]*

BER. What of him ?

He 's quoted for a most perfidious slave,  
With all the spots o' the world tax'd and debosh'd ;  
Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.  
Am I or that or this for what he 'll utter,  
That will speak any thing ?

KING. She hath that ring of yours.

BER. I think she has : certain it is I liked her,  
And boarded her i' the wanton way of youth :

She knew her distance, and did angle for me, 210  
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,  
As all impediments in fancy's course  
Are motives of more fancy ; and, in fine,  
Her infinite cunning, with her modern grace,  
Subdued me to her rate : she got the ring ;  
And I had that which any inferior might  
At market-price have bought.

DIA. I must be patient :  
You, that have turn'd off a first so noble wife,  
May justly diet me. I pray you yet,  
Since you lack virtue I will lose a husband, 220  
Send for your ring, I will return it home,  
And give me mine again.

BER. I have it not.

KING. What ring was yours, I pray you ?

DIA. Sir, much like  
The same upon your finger.

KING. Know you this ring ? this ring was his of late.

---

212-213 *As all impediments . . . fancy*] As all obstructions in the way of love only incite its increase.

214 *Her infinite cunning*] The First Folio reading is *Her insuite coming*, of which no sense has been made. The felicitous emendation in the text is due to Sidney Walker. "Modern grace" may be "modish grace." But the conjectural reading, *modest grace*, deserves attention.

215 *Subdued me to her rate*] Brought me to accept her terms.

219 *diet me*] Perhaps this may mean "prescribe for me a regimen or course of living." Cf. note on IV, iii, 28, *supra*. The reading is generally held to be corrupt. The meaning required seems to be something like "feed on me."

DIA. And this was it I gave him, being abed.

KING. The story then goes false, you threw it him  
Out of a casement.

DIA. I have spoke the truth.

*Enter PAROLLES*

BER. My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

KING. You boggle shrewdly, every feather starts you.  
Is this the man you speak of?

DIA. Ay, my lord. 231

KING. Tell me, sirrah, but tell me true, I charge you,  
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,  
Which on your just proceeding I'll keep off,  
By him and by this woman here what know you?

PAR. So please your majesty, my master hath been  
an honourable gentleman: tricks he hath had in him,  
which gentlemen have.

KING. Come, come, to the purpose: did he love this  
woman? 240

PAR. Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

KING. How, I pray you?

PAR. He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a  
woman.

KING. How is that?

PAR. He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

KING. As thou art a knave, and no knave. What an  
equivocal companion is this!

PAR. I am a poor man, and at your majesty's command.

LAF. He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

DIA. Do you know he promised me marriage? 250

PAR. Faith, I know more than I 'll speak.

KING. But wilt thou not speak all thou knowest?

PAR. Yes, so please your majesty. I did go between them, as I said; but more than that, he loved her: for indeed he was mad for her, and talked of Satan, and of Limbo, and of Furies, and I know not what: yet I was in that credit with them at that time, that I knew of their going to bed, and of other motions, as promising her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak of; therefore I will not speak what I know. 260

KING. Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are married : but thou art too fine in thy evidence ; therefore stand aside.

This ring, you say, was yours ?

DIA. Ay, my good lord.

KING. Where did you buy it? or who gave it you?

DIA. It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

KING. Who lent it you ?

DIA. It was not lent me neither.

KING. Where did you find it, then ?

DIA. I found it not.

KING. If it were yours by none of all these ways,  
How could you give it him?

DIA. I never gave it him. 270

LAF. This woman's an easy glove, my lord ; she goes off and on at pleasure.

259 *derive me ill will*] get me, bring down on me, ill will.

262 *too fine*] too subtle, artful.

KING. This ring was mine ; I gave it his first wife.

DIA. It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

KING. Take her away ; I do not like her now ;  
To prison with her : and away with him.  
Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring,  
Thou diest within this hour.

DIA. I'll never tell you.

KING. Take her away.

DIA. I'll put in bail, my liege.

KING. I think thee now some common customer. 280

DIA. By Jove, if ever I knew man, 't was you.

KING. Wherefore hast thou accused him all this  
while?

DIA. Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty :  
He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to 't ;  
I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.  
Great king, I am no strumpet, by my life ;  
I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

KING. She does abuse our ears : to prison with her.

DIA. Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir :

[Exit Widow.

The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for, 290  
And he shall surety me. But for this lord,  
Who hath abused me, as he knows himself,  
Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him :  
He knows himself my bed he hath defiled ;  
And at that time he got his wife with child :  
Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick :  
So there's my riddle, — One that's dead is quick :  
And now behold the meaning.

*Re-enter* Widow, *with* HELENA

KING. Is there no exorcist  
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes ?  
Is 't real that I see ?

HEL.                   No, my good lord ;                   300  
'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,  
The name and not the thing.

BER. Both, both. O, pardon!

HEL. O my good lord, when I was like this maid,  
I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring ;  
And, look you, here 's your letter ; this it says :  
“ When from my finger you can get this ring  
And are by me with child,” &c. This is done :  
Will you be mine, now you are doubly won ?

BER. If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,  
I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly. 310

HEL. If it appear not plain and prove untrue,  
Deadly divorce step between me and you !  
O my dear mother, do I see you living?

LAF. Mine eyes smell onions ; I shall weep anon :  
 [To Parolles] Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher :  
 so, I thank thee : wait on me home, I 'll make sport with  
 thee : let thy courtesies alone, they are scurvy ones.

KING. Let us from point to point this story know,  
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.  
[*To Diana*] If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower, 320

298 *exorcist*] one who raises spirits. Cf. *Jul. Caes.* II, i, 323, 324:  
 "Thou like an *exorcist*, hast conjured up My mortified spirit."

Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower ;  
For I can guess that by thy honest aid  
Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.  
Of that and all the progress, more and less,  
Resolvedly more leisure shall express :  
All yet seems well ; and if it end so meet,  
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.    [*Flourish.*]

EPILOGUE

KING. The king's a beggar, now the play is done :  
All is well ended, if this suit be won,  
That you express content ; which we will pay,  
With strife to please you, day exceeding day :  
Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts ;  
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts. [*Exeunt.*]

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5 *parts*] abilities.







# **A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM**

**WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY GEORGE E. WOODBERRY  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY C. WILHELM**



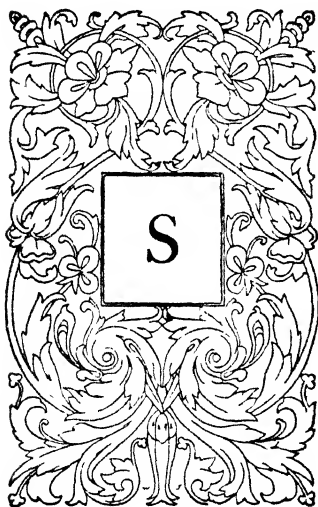
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## INTRODUCTION



**S**HAKESPEARE was first a poet, and afterwards a dramatist; the history of his development was the powerful specialisation of general poetical faculty. He was a very conscious artist; he came early to hold clearly defined in his mind the matter appropriate to imagination, a method of work and a philosophy, — by which I mean a way of conceiving the world, — in whose sphere this matter took on intellectual worth, moral order, and sensuous charm, and from whose laws this method proceeded. Life first appeared to him as a lyrical power; in his earlier plays this tone is constant, and often exceeds and impairs their dramatic quality; golden words, the echo of rhyme, the linked melody of stanzaic structure inside the dialogue, the chorus combination of the speeches

## MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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at marked points, the line for line antiphony of older drama which he inherited, are some of these obvious lyrical traits; and lyricism shows its dominancy also in frequent situations and in soliloquy more deeply imbedded in the drama, and even controls character itself, as in Richard II., Queen Margaret, and perhaps Romeo, in whose career of passion the climaxes of the play are not only lyrical moments but take lyrical form, except in the last act, which is in a greater dramatic manner. This lyricism Shakespeare was slow to disuse, and in his latest work it came back with an autumnal flowering. It was at the first not only youthfully impulsive, but reflective and studious. In "Love's Labour's Lost" may be seen the delight of the young poet conning his art, interested in rhetoric, style, diction; examining, choosing, and refining; concerned with the externals of poetising. The height of his lyricism is reached in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; and naturally the same play discloses the completion of his self-education in this direction, when he had left all questions of verbal surface and structure behind and, entering into the inner secrecy of art, saw its essential nature. What Biron had begun, Theseus finishes.

Every play of Shakespeare is unique and has a world to itself. In some of the dramas this other world is so powerfully made, it draws into itself so much of the reality of the interest, that it seems to persist by a being of its own long after its inhabitants have been laid away in the tragic grave or love's felicity, as the case may be. "Hamlet" and "Twelfth Night" have such an atmos-

## INTRODUCTION

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phere ; but the disclosure is more striking when there is a finer sense of fresh discovery in it. In that age of new geography and England's adventurers taking practical possession of the globe, the inland poet added something to her domain ; he found the forest of Arden, the witch-haunted Scottish heath, the magic isle of Prospero, and together with these he entered what was the most marvellous realm in this kind, the fairy world. If "A Midsummer Night's Dream" attended the celebration of some noble marriage, that was incidental ; but no setting could be more appropriate to the play than such an occasion where the stately lovers should see themselves mirrored in the Athenian king and queen witnessing a play and spectators besides of the action of that fairy power, in an enchantment of midsummer night, which was also to invoke blessings on their wedded union. The bride-bed begins and ends the play ; sleep, night, and dream are its world ; poesy — to use the word of lyrical touch — is its element. The marriage of Theseus is the enclosing frame of all ; but in the foreground and centre are the creatures, sports, and affairs of the fairy sphere. Oberon holds the sceptre and is master of the revels ; the Athenian court, except for its wandering lovers, lies on the outskirts of the scene. Dream is the key-word, the master note on which the melody is built and to which through all changes it returns. It is not the old story how *Life is a Dream* ; with greater subtlety and more philosophical truth, here life is rather a thing that dreams, and all the scene in its moments of high poetic relief has the vivid unreality which is the sphere of



## MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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dreaming power. But even a dream, for dramatic purposes, must have its own cosmos; and this is supplied by the fairy world. It is near nature, near mortals, and fills the visible and known world, but it is isolated from our world by night, and also by sleep, for it is by the intervention of sleep that the lovers come within its sway; it is concentrated, for local habitation and a name, in the enchanted wood. It is, nevertheless, a true world measured by time and space and action; it has distant territories and past history, a king and queen and court with a life of amusement, revels, love-episodes, and royal vexations, all its own; the Indian boy, whose fragranciness is only told of, gives substance to its polity and its affairs. Its function is to organise the dream-spirit of the play, to give sensuous definition and dramatic opportunity, and especially to body forth in films of reality as thin as rainbow bubbles that world of glamour in which Shakespeare will express the essence of the imagination most fantastically, most lyrically. It is the ethereal substance of the play, that in which all the rest coheres and exists, though when it vanishes it leaves "not a rack behind."

Shakespeare, however far afield he may range for poetical matter and creative atmosphere, nevertheless places the true interest in man's life. "Man is one world," in Herbert's phrase, and the other world, in Shakespeare's dramas, whether natural or demoniac or of the elemental spirits, "attends him." Human life in this play is set forth doubly. The court sphere holds the first place, but so far as concerns the action of its higher figures, it is

## INTRODUCTION

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very subordinate. Theseus is king, with the duty to administer the laws of the state unwaveringly, to do justice by the code ; and he discharges this office with a noble dignity of speech. He has, moreover, a paternal solicitude for the youthful lovers, and on the proper occasion an older man's resources to satisfy the father behind the scenes. His is the royal sport of hunting, and the final festivities are for his pleasure. He utters the words of most weight in the intellectual sphere, and gives them authority by his grave character. Yet both he and Hippolyta, who is only a consort, are almost lay figures, decorative with a certain antique severity of outline and pose, the restful part in the general action. To the court sphere belong also the two pair of lovers, Valentine and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena. The youths are the ordinary gentleman lovers of Shakespeare's early stage, with the behaviour and love-psychology belonging to the part. Helena, her pursuit of the graceless Demetrius being granted and her betrayal of the rival lovers' plans being excused, is a more maidenly and attractive character than her schoolmate. Hermia, who only dotes upon Valentine and displays the shrewish temper that Shakespeare so often depicts as a feminine trait. The human plot lies in these characters ; it is slight, and does not greatly interest the spectator in their fortunes ; it is conducted with lively incident by the resources of a comedy of errors freshly handled in which a change of parts in the lovers is effected, with surprises for the two maidens resulting in great discomposure for Hermia, and a doubly ironical situation for Helena,

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wretched in being sought by both lovers, falsely and to her flouting as she thinks. The dramatic action is conventional, yet skilfully contrived, involving the familiar matching of wits, the feminine scolding scene and awakening dream device in *Hermia*; but freshness arises in the treatment of the old machinery of play-acting by means of the novel environing circumstances. The story of the lovers, nevertheless, has by itself little vitality, and is principally an instance of invention.

The second phase of human life exhibited lies in the clown-sphere of the play, the crew of Athenian working-men, who in love and duty tender their poor interlude, the first labour of their minds, for the royal pleasure. The humour that flows from their presence is blended from many sources. Bottom, in whom it is concentrated, own countryman of *Dogberry*, is yet singular in his power to expose himself, laying grossly bare a universal human weakness, in his confident ability to play all parts with the unconscious notion that the use of each is to unlock some talent of his own. There is comic situation in the first contact of ignorance with art, when these rude craftsmen attempt to compass it; in the clinging of their minds to the fact of wall and moonshine, and the ludicrous symbolism of their first essays at representation; in the contrast of their coarse realism with the *Thisbe* fable, turning it to silliness with a clayey hand. There is also, of course, an abstract humour in that a parody of the old stage is involved, still effective though the special plays and authors aimed at are no longer of importance, if indeed there was any pointed contemporary satire in the

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piece. The main comedy is in the English characterisation, the low life, which is rendered in the usual way of Shakespeare in dealing with the populace. The clown-sphere is, however, not dramatically in contrast with the court-sphere; its points are not worked out with that end. Its true opposition is rather with the fairy world, and comes to its dramatic height in the enamouring of Titania with the "translated" Bottom. The fairy plot, slighter even than the human plot, is worked out by this incident in the course of which Oberon obtains the Indian boy and peace is restored to the fairy kingdom. The comedy is most exquisite at this point in the play, and composed at once so grotesquely and delicately that the scene remains one of the capital memories of literature. Titania passes under enchantment through sleep, as the lovers do; but for Bottom a way more appropriate for his character is found in Puck's mischief-making spell who claps the ass's head on him. Titania awakes changed within by the herb's compulsion; Bottom is externally changed, yet in the change reveals himself in his proper nature, — the mask on him is really an unmasking; and his mind is unaffected, but adapts itself at once to his new fairy dignities and services as readily as to the lion's part. Enchantment is at its climax; illusion can do no more; the scene goes on with beauty and humour in one rivalry, and only the merriment of surprised delight fills the onlooker at the masque-like spectacle. The clowns are fled to Athens, and following them there after daybreak Bottom returns to his original world and the task in hand, and they act before Theseus's

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court. The play within the play now takes the place of the woodland masque; but the same opposition of the crass mind with art is subtly echoed in the enactment of the interlude, and the scene is still illusory, though now with the illusion of art.

Character, plot, incident, situation, dialogue, — it is plain that the interest of the play, the charm that has made it a marvel of fantasy and beauty, does not lie in these, but in the diffused dream-atmosphere in which all of life is breathing in the enchanted night. Illusion is the theme to which the play returns in Protean shapes. In its grossest form, the illusion of the senses, which is such a stumbling-block to the hard-headed workingmen of Athens, it is given only by the instrumentality of Puck, the mischief-maker; he transforms Bottom to his marvellous self, the ass-headed one, and he misleads the angry lovers, keeping them apart in the tangled wood. The illusion of the heart appears at every turn and in various disguises: humanly speaking, love is the only interest of the play, and love is the illusion of the heart. So it seems, though obscurely and poetically, to the happy pair of eloping lovers, who in that lyrical part for part chorused dialogue, in which they take up each other's words as in a little song, join in speaking of it, Elizabethan-wise, as

“Momentary as a sound,  
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;  
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,  
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,  
And ere a man hath power to say ‘Behold!’  
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.”

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More clearly to Helena, seeing how love's enchantment works on the deceived Demetrius disdainfully abandoning her charms for Hermia, its true nature is apparent as she uses the stock-expression of Elizabethan love-psychology: —

“Things base and vile, holding no quantity,  
Love can transpose to form and dignity :  
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind ;  
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind :  
Nor hath love's mind of any judgement taste ;  
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste :  
And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.”

In the wood the juice of the little flower of lovers, on which Cupid's arrow fell when he shot harmlessly at the virgin votaress of the West, distilled on the eyes of Valentine made him pursue Helena, and with changed affections call her

“ goddess, nymph, divine and rare,  
Precious, celestial ; ”

on the eyes of Titania made her wake to mirror the tender vision of the ass's head, engarlanded with flowers, curried by the patient Cobweb and Mustardseed, with “a great desire to a bottle of hay” ; on the eyes of Demetrius gave him back to wronged Helena, never to change more, the gift of Oberon, gentle to lovers, who took not off the powerful charm. The lovers woke deeming Theseus with his hounds a vision of that sleep-cumbered night, where, as if it had been Morpheus's own realm every one

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fell to slumber with the frequency and inconsequence of childhood or old age in its neglected corner. But the great illusion is the illusion of art. It is stated with philosophical precision in the front of the last act, which is its sphere ;

“Such tricks hath strong imagination ;  
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy.”

It is described as the function of the poet :—

“And, as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.”

It is put forth by Theseus as the essence of all art : “The best in this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.” This is that great shadow-idea, one of the few that are constant in Shakespeare, whose persistence through all his thought is so marked a characteristic. King Richard's mirror is an early example ; and here, in this play, Oberon, who is a prophecy of Prospero, is named “King of Shadows.” Thus Oberon, who controls the action of the play, is the master spirit of its idea.

Illusion in these various forms, involving the whole compass of life, is strongly supported on all sides by the lyrical element which is also omnipresent. It appears, characteristically, in that opening song-dialogue of Lysander and Hermia ; it is the natural speech, song-

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speech, of Puck and the fairies in the induction to the fairy world ; and it governs the close in those songs of blessing which Coleridge thought the English notes of a better Anacreon. But it is more pervasive than this ; its pastoralism gives the atmosphere, and detail as well, to the rural description, and absorbs all nature in its own point of view in the account of the blight that had fallen on the land : it yields those idyl pictures of girlhood friendship, Cupid shooting his bolt into the West, *Hermia's* awaking, the Indian boy's mother, the hounds of *Theseus*, which enamel the verse ; and throughout it inspires the infinite touches of golden word and melodious cadence which make the language of such surpassing beauty and pure vocal charm. It is in such a garment of lyricism that the theme of illusion is clothed, and it is thrown over the humour as well as the beauty of the play. It seems sometimes that Shakespeare in "*the Northern Island* sundered once from all the human race" was the crest of the Renaissance that there and in him reached its climax ; the historical perspective of three centuries is not yet enough to let this be certainly said ; but in "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*," how much there is characteristic of the great Italian mood of Europe, idyllic, pastoral, delighting in beauty, painting the frieze of the world with mingled loveliness and grotesqueness, but on no part of it, however Cupid and monster wreathed, such a twine of delicacy and fun as the creatures and pranks of Oberon's court in the wood.

Many of the plays of Shakespeare appear to be climactic, and there may be error in ascribing such swift



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and mighty changes even to the soul most capable of education of all born of English earth. If the view here taken have any colour of probability, if it be not in its turn a dreaming of the mind, this play discloses as its main characteristic the ripened presence of the poetical faculty, exceeding in value and power the human material with which the dramatist dealt; here Shakespeare at the height of his lyrical inspiration, at the climax of the modes of power possible to its exercise, has reached for the time being a limit. The eloquence of Richard has become, not the passion of Lear, not the natural elevation of Hamlet even, but pure poetry; here the experimental study of Biron has become the mastery of the nature of art in its substance beyond the form; here the handling of the dramatic means of earlier comedy and history has become so habitual that it ceases to occupy any special place or prominence. A supremacy of power in many ways has been achieved. But the sign and proof of excellency in the poetical faculty, which is here to the fore, is the temper of grace by which humour itself is transformed. Bottom, even, in his adornments of flower and leaf, with the doting fondness of the queen of the fairies and the ministries of the sweet winged courtiers, becomes almost poetical. To poetise humour is the last victory of the spirit of the beautiful. Courtesy wins a similar noble triumph in the human sphere, when Theseus lays down its law, finding grace in halting words and simple virtue in the awkward service of even the coarse-handed and rude-minded craftsmen of Athens turned poet and player in their lowest

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estate for his sake. The presence of this spirit in both kinds is like the touch of Shakespeare's hand ; the man is felt through it, whose wisdom was amiableness in that morning hour. It is a poet's wisdom and fitly crowns him at the moment of his achievement.

The play, too, is throughout a poet's play. It has the fluidity, the brightness, the insubstantiality of a poet's conception of life ; for life to him in whose hand it is plastic, contracts plasticity from his hand. Amid such scenes rising in the wakeful fancy life collects enchantment like dew, and seems itself the wood blown through by the breath of the summer night, sleep-heavy, dream-haunted. Then it is nature to use Puck's words, saying, "What fools these mortals be," who take this world for eternal where there is no abiding principle. Art itself is but Hamlet's "shadow's shadow," yet it has more of eternity in it, and passes not away. This supremacy of the imaginative view of the world which permeates the play has made it peculiarly dear to poets, and there was such felicity in its conception that it has fertilised their minds, and occasioned a European progeny whose dwelling place is Oberon's world, so real has that world which Shakespeare evoked become to the imagination of men. It is true, of course, that historical probability gives such credence to Oberon as the legend of Troy gave to Achilles ; in an old French poem he appears, and even the Indian boy in his company ; but it is to be feared that, like Agamemnon, the Indian boy without his poet would have slipped into oblivion. The issue of genius is of more import than its obscure ancestry ; it is often

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infertile ; but Shakespeare not only gave the mould of heroic and romantic human character to the English imagination ; he also made it free of his domains, though it is a daring spirit who ventures to conjure there. The fairy world, by virtue of some kindness in it, has been nearer to the poetic mind than Arden or the magic isle, and more familiarly ranged. A literature, indeed, has sprung from it trailing a bright track in the world's fancy. The source, nevertheless, remains shining over all. In this play, — to draw these suggestions to an end, — Shakespeare, perfected in poetry, found himself in Oberon “ King of Shadows,” lord of the lyrical world of sensuous emotion and all that there inhabits, even to laughter at its clownish human visitants. He left this realm of the gracious comedy of beauty to hold the sceptre of illusion in the human soul, and sway for a season the tragic world ; but in that Buddhistic progress he made through the souls of men, within the limits of one mortal life, coming to his last transmigration in Prospero, he again unveiled himself as “ King of Shadows,” still in the same dream-life that he had first seized in the conception of the midsummer night, — the illusory world of art, of life, of all being known to man's consciousness ; and wrote the last word of poetic truth : —

“ We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.”

G. E. WOODBERRY.

# **A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.

EGEUS, father to Hermia.

LYSANDER, } in love with Hermia.  
DEMETRIUS, }

PHILOSTRATE, master of the revels to Theseus.

QUINCE, a carpenter.

SNUG, a joiner.

BOTTOM, a weaver.

FLUTE, a bellows-mender. .

SNOUT, a tinker.

STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.

HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, king of the fairies.

TITANIA, queen of the fairies.

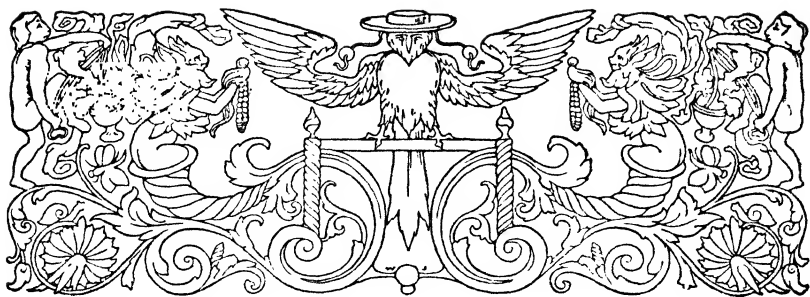
PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.

PEASEBLOSSOM, }  
COBWEB, } fairies.  
MOTH, }  
MUSTARDSEED, }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on  
Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE — *Athens, and a wood near it*

<sup>1</sup> DRAMATIS PERSONÆ] Two editions of the play appeared in quarto in 1600, during Shakespeare's lifetime. Of these, that which was "printed by James Roberts" was followed in the First Folio of 1623. None of the early texts are divided into scenes. The Folio version marked the acts alone. The Quartos ignore acts and scenes alike. Again, neither Folios nor Quartos supply the "dramatis personæ." Rowe's edition of 1709 first gave a list of characters, with indication of the scenes. The scenic divisions, as usually adopted now, were devised by a later commentator, Capell.



## ACT FIRST—SCENE I—ATHENS

### THE PALACE OF THESEUS

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants*

THESEUS



NOW, FAIR HIPPOLYTA,  
our nuptial hour  
Draws on apace ; four happy days  
bring in  
Another moon : but, O, methinks,  
how slow  
This old moon wanes ! she lingers  
my desires,  
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,  
Long withering out a young man's  
revenue.

HIP. Four days will quickly  
steep themselves in night ;

Four nights will quickly dream away the time ;  
And then the moon, like to a silver bow  
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night  
Of our solemnities.

10

4 *lingers*] causes to linger, protracts.

10 *New-bent*] Rowe's correction of the original reading *Now bent*.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT I

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THE.                      Go, Philostrate,  
 Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments ;  
 Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth :  
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals ;  
 The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*  
 Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
 And won thy love, doing thee injuries ;  
 But I will wed thee in another key,  
 With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

*Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS*

EGE. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke ! 20

THE. Thanks, good Egeus : what's the news with thee ?

EGE. Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.  
 Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,  
 This man hath my consent to marry her.  
 Stand forth, Lysander : and, my gracious duke,  
 This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child :  
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child :  
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung, 30  
 With feigning voice, verses of feigning love ;

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27 *This man hath bewitch'd*] This is the reading of the two Quartos and the First Folio. By slurring "hath" in pronunciation, the metrical irregularity may be neutralised. The later Folios improve the metre by reading *This hath bewitch'd*. Theobald proposed *This man hath witch'd*.

31 *feigning voice . . . feigning love*] There is a play on the word

And stolen the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers  
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:  
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;  
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,  
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,  
Be it so she will not here before your Grace  
Consent to marry with Demetrius,  
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,  
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:  
Which shall be either to this gentleman  
Or to her death, according to our law  
Immediately provided in that case.

40

THE. What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid:  
To you your father should be as a god;  
One that composed your beauties; yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a form in wax  
By him imprinted and within his power

50

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"feigning," which is first used in the technical sense (in music) of "singing softly," "humming," and then in the ordinary sense of "dissembling."

32 *And stolen . . . fantasy*] The general sense is "stealthily gained her affections." "Fantasy" is used like "fancy," for "love" or "thought of love." Cf. line 155, *infra*, and *M. Wives*, V, v, 91: "Fie on sinful *fantasy*." "Impression" means semblance or shape, so that "impression of her fantasy" is equivalent to the "semblance of her love." Cf. *Two Gent.*, II. iv, 197, 198:

"a waxen image 'gainst the fire,  
Bears no *impression* of the thing it was."

35 *unhardened*] soft, impressionable.



## MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT I

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To leave the figure or disfigure it.  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HER. So is Lysander.

THE.                                In himself he is ;  
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,  
The other must be held the worthier.

HER. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THE. Rather your eyes must with his judgement  
look.

HER. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.  
I know not by what power I am made bold,  
Nor how it may concern my modesty,  
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts ;  
But I beseech your Grace that I may know  
The worst that may befall me in this case,  
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

60

THE. Either to die the death, or to abjure  
For ever the society of men.  
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires ;  
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,  
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,  
You can endure the livery of a nun ;  
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,  
To live a barren sister all your life,  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage ;

70

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54 *in this kind*] in business of this nature. The expression twice recurs below. Cf. IV, i, 88 and 210.

*father's voice*] father's approval. Cf. *All's Well*, II, iii, 52.

# SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,  
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,  
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HER. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up  
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke  
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

80

THE. Take time to pause; and, by the next new  
moon, —

The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,  
For everlasting bond of fellowship, —  
Upon that day either prepare to die  
For disobedience to your father's will,  
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;  
Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life.

90

DEM. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield  
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYS. You have her father's love, Demetrius;  
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGE. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,  
And what is mine my love shall render him.

76 *distill'd*] with its scent extracted and preserved by distillation. Cf. *Sonnet* V, 9, "summer's *distillation*," and 13, "flowers *distilled*," and *Sonnet* LIV, 21: "Of their [*i. e.*, roses] sweet deaths are sweetest odours made." The general sentiment is a leading topic of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

80 *virgin patent*] the privilege of remaining a virgin.

81 *his lordship, whose*] the dominion or guardianship of him, to whose, etc.

And she is mine, and all my right of her  
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYS. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
As well possess'd ; my love is more than his ; 100  
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,  
If not with vantage, as Demetrius' ;  
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,  
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia :  
Why should not I then prosecute my right ?  
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
And won her soul ; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,  
Upon this spotted and inconstant man. 110

THE. I must confess that I have heard so much,  
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof ;  
But, being over-full of self-affairs,  
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come ;  
And come, Egeus ; you shall go with me,  
I have some private schooling for you both.  
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
To fit your fancies to your father's will ;  
Or else the law of Athens yields you up, —  
Which by no means we may extenuate, — 120  
To death, or to a vow of single life.  
Come, my Hippolyta : what cheer, my love ?  
Demetrius and Egeus, go along :  
I must employ you in some business  
Against our nuptial, and confer with you  
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

SCENE I      MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

EGE. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*]

LYS. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?  
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HER. Belike for want of rain, which I could well      130  
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYS. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth;  
But, either it was different in blood, —

HER. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYS. Or else misgraffed in respect of years, —

HER. O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

LYS. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends, —

HER. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.      140

LYS. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,  
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,  
Making it momentany as a sound,  
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;  
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,  
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,  
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"  
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:  
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HER. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,      150  
It stands as an edict in destiny:

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136 *low*] Theobald's emendation for the old reading *loue*.

143 *momentany*] The reading of the Quartos. The Folios read *momem-  
tarie*. Both forms were common. *Momentany* had the authority  
of early usage. Cf. "*momemtaine*," Fr. Lat. "*momentaneus*."

Then let us teach our trial patience,  
Because it is a customary cross,  
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,  
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

LYS A good persuasion : therefore, hear me, Hermia.  
I have a widow aunt, a dowager  
Of great revenue, and she hath no child :  
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues ;  
And she respects me as her only son. 160  
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee ;  
And to that place the sharp Athenian law  
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,  
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night ;  
And in the wood, a league without the town,  
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,  
To do observance to a morn of May,  
There will I stay for thee.

HER. My good Lysander !  
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,  
By his best arrow with the golden head, 170  
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,  
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,

155 *fancy's followers*] For "fancy" in the sense of love, cf. "fancy-free," II, i, 164, *infra*, "fancy-sick," III, ii, 96, and "in fancy," IV, i, 160.

156 *persuasion*] persuasive argument.

170 *By his . . . head*] Ovid (*Met.*, I, 466) credits Cupid with two arrows ; one, that "causeth love," is "all of gold with point full sharpe and bright" ; the other, that "chaseth love," is blunt, "whose steele with leaden head is dight." The quoted words are from Golding's translation.

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,  
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,  
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,  
 In number more than ever women spoke,  
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,  
 To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

*Enter HELENA*

HER. God speed fair Helena ! whither away ? 180

HEL. Call you me fair ? that fair again unsay.  
 Demetrius loves your fair : O happy fair !  
 Your eyes are lode-stars ; and your tongue's sweet air  
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,  
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.  
 Sickness is catching : O, were favour so,  
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go ;  
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190  
 The rest I'd give to be to you translated.  
 O, teach me how you look ; and with what art  
 You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart !

HER. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HEL. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such  
 skill !

HER. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

---

173 *the Carthage queen*] In *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, the play by Marlowe and Nashe, the heroine is thus described four times. Cf. Act. III, Sc. iv, 40, and IV, iv, 29, 132, 157.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT I

---

HEL. O that my prayers could such affection move !

HER. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HEL. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HER. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

HEL. None, but your beauty : would that fault were mine !

HER. Take comfort : he no more shall see my face ;  
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,  
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me :  
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,  
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell !

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold :  
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold  
Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210  
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,  
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,  
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HER. And in the wood, where often you and I  
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,  
There my Lysander and myself shall meet ;  
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
To seek new friends and stranger companies.

---

200 *no fault*] the reading of the first Quarto. The second Quarto and the Folios read *none fault*.

215 *faint primrose-beds*] The epithet probably refers to the colour rather than to the smell. Steevens thought reference was made to the smell. Cf. "pale primroses," *Wint. Tale*, IV, iv, 122, and *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 221 ; "This pale *faint* swan," *K. John*, V, vii, 21.

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Farewell, sweet playfellow : pray thou for us ;  
 And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius !  
 Keep word, Lysander : we must starve our sight  
 From lovers' food till morrow deep mid<sup>n</sup>ight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. [Exit Herm.]

Helena, adieu :

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you ! [Exit.

HEL. How happy some o'er other some can be !  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.  
But what of that ? Demetrius thinks not so ;  
He will not know what all but he do know :  
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,  
So I, admiring of his qualities :  
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,  
Love can transpose to form and dignity :  
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind ;  
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind :  
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste ;  
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste :  
And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,  
So the boy Love is perjur'd everywhere :  
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine ;  
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.

232 *holding no quantity*] having no genuine value, no value proportioned to that which is perversely set on them (by love). Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 162: "For women's fear and love *holds quantity*."



# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT I

---

I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night  
Pursue her ; and for this intelligence  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense :  
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,  
To have his sight thither and back again.

250

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE II — THE SAME

### QUINCE'S HOUSE

*Enter* QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

QUIN. Is all our company here ?

BOT. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUIN. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOT. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on ; then read the names of the actors ; and so grow to a point.

QUIN. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOT. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

249 *it is a dear expense*] I pay dearly, I make a bitter bargain (in giving Demetrius information, which will put him on the track of my rival Hermia).

2 *generally*] Bottom's confused error for " particularly," or " severally."

## SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

QUIN. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOT. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUIN. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOT. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUIN. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOT. That will ask some tears in the true performing of <sup>20</sup>  
it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will  
move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the  
rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play  
Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks  
And shivering shocks  
Shall break the locks  
Of prison-gates;

22 *condole*] mourn, show signs of lamentation. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 93:

"In obstinate *condolence*," and "*condoling*," line 34, *infra*.

23 *Ercles*] Apparent reference to a popular play of the period. Cf. Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*: "The twelve labors of *Hercules* have I terribly thundered on the stage." Greene's Works, Ed. Grosart, Vol. XII, p. 131.

24 *to tear a cat in*] to rant violently. In Middleton's *Roaring Girl*, 1611, a roguish character is called "Tearcat"; cf. V, i, 160-161: "Ruffling *Tearcat* is my name, and a ruffler is my style, my title, my profession." In the anonymous piece called *Histrionastix*, 1610, it was said of an actor that he "would rend and *tear a cat* upon the stage." Hamlet illustrates the general sentiment in his advice to the players to beware of tearing a passion to tatters. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 9 *seq.*

*to make all split*] to use extravagantly violent gesture; an expression derived from the figure of a storm splitting a vessel at sea. Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, II, iii: "Two roaring boys of Rome, that *made all split*."

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT I

---

And i'hibbus' car  
Shall shine from far,  
And make and mar  
The foolish Fates.

30

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.  
This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more  
condoling.

QUIN. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLU. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLU. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUIN. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLU. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a 40  
beard coming.

QUIN. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and  
you may speak as small as you will.

BOT. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby  
too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne,  
Thisne;" "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby  
dear, and lady dear!"

QUIN. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute,  
you Thisby.

BOT. Well, proceed.

QUIN. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

50

STAR. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's  
mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

43 *speaks as small*] Cf. *M. Wives*, I, i, 43, where Slender says of Anne

Page, "She has brown hair, and *speaks small like a woman*."

52-53 *Thisby's mother*] This character, like "Pyramus' father," and "This-

SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. You, Pyramus' father : myself, Thisby's father : Snug, the joiner ; you, the lion's part : and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG. Have you the lion's part written ? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUIN. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing <sup>60</sup> but roaring.

BOT. Let me play the lion too : I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me ; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, " Let him roar again, let him roar again."

QUIN. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek ; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL. That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOT. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the <sup>70</sup> ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us : but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove ; I will roar you an 't were any nightingale.

QUIN. You can play no part but Pyramus ; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man ; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day ; a most lovely, gentleman-like man : therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

---

by's father," mentioned below (l. 55), does not appear in the interlude, as presented in Act V. Sc. i. Starveling, Snout, and Quince play respectively the parts of Moonshine, Wall, and Prologue, which are not noticed in the rehearsals.

BOT. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in ?

80

QUIN. Why, what you will.

BOT. I will discharge it in either your straw colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown colour beard, your perfect yellow.

QUIN. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOT. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

QUIN. At the duke's oak we meet.

BOT. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [Exeunt.]

---

83 *purple-in-grain*] scarlet or crimson. Under "migraine," Cotgrave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*, gives the meanings scarlet or *purple in grain*.

86 *French crowns*] coins of a bright yellow colour. There is a playful allusion here to the belief that baldness was due to venereal disease, which was held to be a peculiarly French malady.

95 *obscenely*] an ignorant blunder for "seemly." Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, i, 145, where the clown Costard employs the word with like clumsiness.

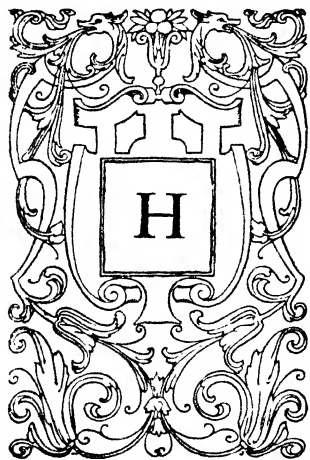
98 *hold or cut bow-strings*] a colloquial expression for "whatever happens," "in any event."



## ACT SECOND — SCENE I

### A WOOD NEAR ATHENS

PUCK *Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy and PUCK*



OW NOW, SPIRIT!  
whither wander you?

FAL. Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander every where,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
The cowslips tall her pensioners  
be :

10

In their gold coats spots you see ;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In those freckles live their savours :

7 *moon's sphere*] The metre requires that *moon's* should be pronounced dissyllabically. The moon, like all other planets and stars, was currently held to be enclosed in a hollow crystalline globe or sphere, and it was this sphere which was supposed to circle swiftly round the earth.

9 *To dew her orbs*] To sprinkle with dew fairy rings.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT II

---

I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
 Farewell, thou lob of spirits ; I 'll be gone :  
 Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night :  
 Take heed the queen come not within his sight ;  
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath, 20  
 Because that she as her attendant hath  
 A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king ;  
 She never had so sweet a changeling :  
 And jealous Oberon would have the child  
 Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild ;  
 But she perforce withholds the loved boy,  
 Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy :  
 And now they never meet in grove or green,  
 By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,  
 But they do square, that all their elves for fear 30  
 Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

10 *pensioners*] The cowslips are here likened to Queen Elizabeth's gentlemen-at-arms, who were called "pensioners" and wore rich uniforms.

11 *spots*] A reference to the red spots, "the crimson drops I' the bottom of a cowslip," *Cymb.*, II, ii, 38.

15 *hang a pearl . . . ear*] an allusion to the custom of wearing pearl or other jewel in the ear. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, v, 44: "Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear."

23 *changeling*] Here the child stolen by the fairies; but commonly applied to the feeble infant who is left by the fairies in exchange for the strong child which they stole away.

30 *square*] Cf. Cotgrave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*, "*Sequarrer* : to strout, or *square* it ; looke big on't, carrie his armes a kemboll, bragadocio-like."

FAL. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
 Call'd Robin Goodfellow : are not you he  
 That frights the maidens of the villagery ;  
 Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,  
 And bootless make the breathless housewife churn ;  
 And sometime make the drink to bear no barm ;  
 Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?  
 Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,  
 You do their work, and they shall have good luck : 40  
 Are not you he ?

PUCK.            Thou speak'st aright ;  
 I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
 I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,  
 When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
 Neighing in likeness of a filly foal :  
 And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
 In very likeness of a roasted crab ;  
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
 And on her withered dewlap pour the ale. 50  
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;  
 Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
 And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough ;

47-48 *gossip's bowl . . . crab*] an old crone's drink of spiced ale, with roasted crab apples floating in it. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, III, v, 174: "a gossip's bowl."

54 "*tailor*"] The reading seems doubtful. Dr. Johnson thought that he had heard some such exclamation start to the lips of one who suddenly fell backward; the doctor also suggested that one who slips beside his chair "falls as a tailor squats upon his board."



# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT II

---

And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh ;  
 And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear  
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.  
 But, room, fairy ! here comes Oberon.

FAL. And here my mistress. Would that he were  
 gone !

*Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train ; from the other,  
 TITANIA, with hers*

OBE. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania. 60

TITA. What, jealous Oberon ! Fairies, skip hence :  
 I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBE. Tarry, rash wanton : am not I thy lord ?

TITA. Then I must be thy lady : but I know  
 When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
 And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
 Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love  
 To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,  
 Come from the farthest steppe of India ?

But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon, 70  
 Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
 To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
 To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBE. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,

No contemporary usage has been met with to confirm the doctor's  
 conjectural explanation.

69 *steppe*] This is the reading of the first Quarto, but is doubtless a mis-  
 spelling of "steepe" or "mountain," which is found in all other  
 early editions. The Russian form, "steppe," was unknown to  
 Western Europe till the end of the 18th century.

# SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
 Knowing I know thy love to Theseus ?  
 Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night  
 From Perigenia, whom he ravished ?  
 And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,  
 With Ariadne and Antiopa ?

80

TITA. These are the forgeries of jealousy :  
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,  
 By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
 Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
 Contagious fogs ; which, falling in the land,  
 Have every pelting river made so proud,  
 That they have overborne their continents :  
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,  
 The ploughman lost his sweat ; and the green corn

90

78-80 *Perigenia . . . Ægle . . . Ariadne . . . Antiopa*] The tale of Theseus's relations with these four women is described in Plutarch's life of Theseus, with which his collected "Lives" begin. The book was accessible to Shakespeare in North's translation. North transforms the Greek Περικυονή into the unauthorised shape "Perigouna."

88-114 *the winds . . . which is which*] The extremely bad weather in England during the winter of 1593-94 seems to have suggested this passage. The meteorological disturbances of that season are described in very similar terms in Dr. King's "Lectures upon Ionas," delivered at York in 1594, but not published till 1618.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    *Act I*

Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard :  
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock ;  
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud ;  
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,  
 For lack of tread, are undistinguishable :  
 The human mortals want their winter here ;  
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest :  
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,  
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
 That rheumatic diseases do abound :  
 And thorough this distemperature we see  
 The seasons alter : hoary-headed frosts  
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;  
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown

100

98 *nine men's morris*] This was a boy's game, popular in the Midlands. It was played on turf. Three concentric squares were cut. The middle space was kept clear. Outside it, four lines connected the angular points of the three squares, while another four bisected their sides. Holes in each of these eight transverse lines emphasised the points at which they crossed or touched the squares. There were two players, each of whom, being provided with "nine men," or counters, sought to prevent the other from filling with his counters the three holes in any one of the eight transverse lines. Players were permitted alternate moves, as in draughts. The French name of "*merelles*," which the men or counters originally bore, was corrupted into "*morris*."

99 *quaint mazes*] complicated labyrinthine figures, which boys were in the habit of marking on the grass.

109 *thin*] All the early editions read *chin*. Theobald conjectured *chill*. "Thin," a late emendation, often means "thin haired." Cf.

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds 110  
 Is, as in mockery, set : the spring, the summer,  
 The chiding autumn, angry winter, change  
 Their wonted liveries ; and the mazed world,  
 By their increase, now knows not which is which :  
 And this same progeny of evils comes  
 From our debate, from our dissension ;  
 We are their parents and original.

OBE. Do you amend it, then ; it lies in you :  
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?  
 I do but beg a little changeling boy, 120  
 To be my henchman.

TITA.                      Set your heart at rest :  
 The fairy land buys not the child of me.  
 His mother was a votaress of my order :  
 And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side ;  
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
 Marking the embarked traders on the flood ;  
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind ;  
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait 130  
 Following, — her womb then rich with my young  
 squire, —

Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
 To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
 As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.

---

*Rich. II*, III, ii, 112 : "*thin* and hairless scalps." In Elizabethan writing *t* and *c* were difficult to distinguish.

130 *swimming*] gliding ; a dancing step was called the *swim*.

But she, being mortal, of that boy did die ;  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy ;  
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBE. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

TITA. Perchance till after 'Theseus' wedding-day.  
If you will patiently dance in our round, 140  
And see our moonlight revels, go with us ;  
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBE. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITA. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away !  
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

*[Exit Titania with her Train.]*

OBE. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this  
grove

Till I torment thee for this injury.

My gentle Puck, come hither. 'Thou rememberest  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back, 150  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,

149-166. This passage is commonly interpreted as a reminiscence of the pageant with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth on her visit to his castle of Kenilworth in 1575. It is quite possible that the outdoor fêtes which distinguished the royal reception were witnessed by Shakespeare in boyhood. Queen Elizabeth is certainly intended by "a fair vestal throned by the west" (l. 158). The ordinary interpretation identifies "Cupid all arm'd" with the Queen's host, Leicester, who, failing in his endeavour to entrap his sovereign's affections, attracted the love of Lettice, Countess of Essex, whom he subsequently married. On the other hand, the lines may be no more than a play of fancy encircling a poetic compliment to Queen Elizabeth.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK. I remember.

OBE. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd : a certain aim he took  
At a fair vestal throned by the west,  
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts :  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
And the imperial votaress passed on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.  
Fetch me that flower ; the herb I shew'd thee once :  
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid  
Will make or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb ; and be thou here again  
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK. I'll put a girdle round about the earth  
In forty minutes. [Exit.]

OBE. Having once this juice,

164 *fancy-free*] free from love; cf. "fancy-sick," III, ii, 96, *infra*, and note on I, i, 155, *supra*.

168 *love-in-idleness*] one of the many popular names of the pansy, or heart's-ease (Lat., *Viola tricolor*).

I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
 And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.  
 The next thing then she waking looks upon,  
 Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, 180  
 On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,  
 She shall pursue it with the soul of love :  
 And ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
 As I can take it with another herb,  
 I'll make her render up her page to me.  
 But who comes here ? I am invisible ;  
 And I will overhear their conference.

*Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him*

DEM. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
 Where is Lysander and fair Hermia ?  
 The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. 190  
 Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood ;  
 And here am I, and wode within this wood,  
 Because I cannot meet my Hermia.  
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HEL. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant ;  
 But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
 Is true as steel : leave you your power to draw,  
 And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEM. Do I entice you ? do I speak you fair ?  
 Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth 200  
 Tell you, I do not nor I cannot love you ?

---

186 *I am invisible*] Among the properties enumerated in the Diary of the stage-manager, Henslowe, was "a robe for to go *invisible*."  
 This Oberon now assumes.

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

HEL. And even for that do I love you the more.  
 I am your spaniel ; and, Demetrius,  
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you :  
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
 Neglect me, lose me ; only give me leave,  
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you.  
 What worser place can I beg in your love, —  
 And yet a place of high respect with me, —  
 Than to be used as you use your dog ?

210

DEM. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit ;  
 For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HEL. And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEM. You do impeach your modesty too much,  
 To leave the city, and commit yourself  
 Into the hands of one that loves you not ;  
 To trust the opportunity of night  
 And the ill counsel of a desert place  
 With the rich worth of your virginity.

HEL. Your virtue is my privilege : for that  
 It is not night when I do see your face,  
 Therefore I think I am not in the night ;  
 Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,  
 For you in my respect are all the world :  
 Then how can it be said I am alone,  
 When all the world is here to look on me ?

220

DEM. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,  
 And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

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220-224] This seems an echo of *Tibullus*, IV, xiii, 11 :

“ tu nocte vel atra  
 Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis.”



## MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

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HEL. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  
Run when you will, the story shall be changed : 230  
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase ;  
The dove pursues the griffin ; the mild hind  
Makes speed to catch the tiger ; bootless speed,  
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies.

DEM. I will not stay thy questions ; let me go :  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in' the wood.

HEL. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius !  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex : 240  
We cannot fight for love, as men may do ;  
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

[*Exit Dem.*

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*

OBE. Fare thee well, nymph : ere he do leave this grove,  
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

*Re-enter Puck*

Hast thou the flower there ? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK. Ay, there it is.

OBE. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows ; 250  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine :

---

244 *upon the hand*] by the hand. Cf. *Much Ado*, IV, i, 223 : "She died *upon his words*."

## SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight ;  
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,  
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in :  
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,  
And make her full of hateful fantasies.  
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove :  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
With a disdainful youth : anoint his eyes ;  
But do it when the next thing he espies  
May be the lady : thou shalt know the man  
By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
Effect it with some care that he may prove  
More fond on her than she upon her love :  
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

260

PUCK. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

*Enter* TITANIA, *with her train*

TITA. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song ;  
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence ;  
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds ;  
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,  
To make my small elves coats ; and some keep back  
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders  
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep ;  
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT II

## SONG

*Fir. Fairy.* You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;  
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,  
Come not near our fairy queen.

## CHORUS

Philomel, with melody  
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby :  
Never harm,  
Nor spell, nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh ;  
So, good night, with lullaby.

*Fir. Fairy.* Weaving spiders, come not here ;  
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence !  
Beetles black, approach not near ;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

## CHORUS

Philomel, with melody, &c.

SEC. FAIRY. Hence, away! now all is well:  
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

9 double] forked. Cf. III, ii, 72, *infra*, "adder . . . with doubler tongue," and *Tempest*, II, ii, 13: "Adders who with cloven tongues."

21 *long-legg'd spinners*] a synonym of the "weaving spiders" of the previous line.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

*Enter OBERON, and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids*

OBE. What thou seest when thou dost wake,  
 Do it for thy true-love take ;  
 Love and languish for his sake :  
 Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, 30  
 Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
 In thy eye that shall appear  
 When thou wakest, it is thy dear :  
 Wake when some vile thing is near. [Exit.]

*Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA*

LYS. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the  
 wood ;  
 And to speak troth, I have forgot our way :  
 We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,  
 And tarry for the comfort of the day.  
 HER. Be it so, Lysander : find you out a bed ;  
 For I upon this bank will rest my head. 40  
 LYS. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both ;  
 One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.  
 HER. Nay, good Lysander ; for my sake, my dear,  
 Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.  
 LYS. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence !  
 Love takes the meaning in love's conference.  
 I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,  
 So that but one heart we can make of it :  
 Two bosoms interchained with an oath ;

---

49 *interchained*] the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read, less intelligibly, *interchanged*.

So then two bosoms and a single troth. 50  
 Then by your side no bed-room me deny ;  
 For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HER. Lysander riddles very prettily :  
 Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,  
 If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.  
 But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy  
 Lie further off ; in human modesty,  
 Such separation as may well be said  
 Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,  
 So far be distant ; and, good night, sweet friend : 60  
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end !

LYS. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I ;  
 And then end life when I end loyalty !  
 Here is my bed : sleep give thee all his rest !

HER. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be  
 press'd ! [ *They sleep.* ]

*Enter PUCK*

PUCK. Through the forest have I gone,  
 But Athenian found I none,  
 On whose eyes I might approve  
 This flower's force in stirring love.  
 Night and silence. — Who is here ? 70  
 Weeds of Athens he doth wear :  
 This is he, my master said,  
 Despised the Athenian maid ;  
 And here the maiden, sleeping sound,  
 On the dank and dirty ground.  
 Pretty soul ! she durst not lie

SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.  
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw  
All the power this charm doth owe.  
When thou wakest, let love forbid 80  
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid :  
So awake when I am gone ;  
For I must now to Oberon. [Exit.

*Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running*

HEL. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEM. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me  
thus.

HEL. O, wilt thou darkling leave me ? do not so.

DEM. Stay, on thy peril : I alone will go. [Exit.

HEL. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase !

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies ; 90

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright ? Not with salt tears :

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear ;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear :

Therefore no marvel though Demetrius

Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne ?

But who is here ? Lysander ! on the ground ! 100

Dead ? or asleep ? I see no blood, no wound.

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT II

---

LYS. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will for thy  
sweet sake.

Transparent Helena! Nature shews art,  
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.  
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word  
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HEL. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.  
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what  
though?

Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content. 110

LYS. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent  
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.  
Not Hermia but Helena I love:  
Who will not change a raven for a dove?  
The will of man is by his reason sway'd  
And reason says you are the worthier maid.  
Things growing are not ripe until their season:  
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;  
And touching now the point of human skill,  
Reason becomes the marshal to my will, 120  
And leads me to your eyes; where I o'erlook

---

104 *Nature shews art*] This is the reading of the Quartos. The First Folio substitutes *Nature her shewes*. The other Folios read *here* for *her*. In any case the metre is slightly irregular. *Nature here shows art* gives the best sense and metre: "in the present instance Nature displays the ingenuity of art, which has invented transparent substances like glass."

118-120 *So I . . . will*] While I was young I did not grow ripe in reason, and now that I have reached the height of human intelligence, reason takes command of my will.

## SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

Love's stories, written in love's richest book.

HEL. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born ?  
 When at your hands did I deserve this scorn ?  
 Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,  
 That I did never, no, nor never can,  
 Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,  
 But you must flout my insufficiency ?  
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,  
 In such disdainful manner me to woo.

130

But fare you well : perforce I must confess  
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.  
 O, that a lady, of one man refused,  
 Should of another therefore be abused !

[Exit.

LYS. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there :  
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near !  
 For as a surfeit of the sweetest things  
 The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,  
 Or as the heresies that men do leave  
 Are hated most of those they did deceive,  
 So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,  
 Of all be hated, but the most of me !

140

And, all my powers, address your love and might  
 To honour Helen and to be her knight !

[Exit.

HER. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me ! do thy  
 best

To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast !

---

122 *love's richest book*] Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iii, 86, *seq.* :

“ And what obscured in this fair volume lies  
 Find written in the margin of his eyes.  
 This *precious book of love* . . . ”



Ay me, for pity ! what a dream was here !

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear :

Methought a serpent eat my heart away,

And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.

150

Lysander ! what, removed ?    Lysander ! lord !

What, out of hearing ? gone ? no sound, no word ?

Alack, where are you ? speak, an if you hear :

Speak, of all loves !    I swoon almost with fear.

No ? then I well perceive you are not nigh :

Either death or you I'll find immediately.

[*Exit.*

---

154 *of all loves !*] in the name of all lovers, a common adjuration.

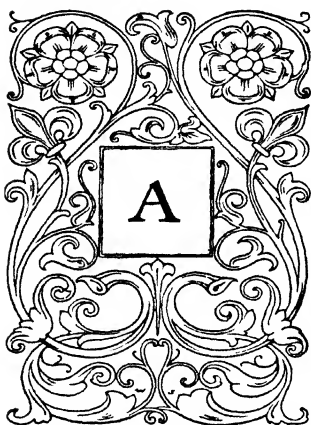


# ACT THIRD — SCENE I — THE WOOD

## TITANIA LYING ASLEEP

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

BOTTOM



ARE WE ALL MET?

QUIN. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

BOT. Peter Quince, —

QUIN. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOT. There are things in this comedy of *Pyramus and Thisby* that will never please. First, *Pyramus* must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. 10 How answer you that?

7 *bully*] A good fellow; a general term of endearment, without any insinuation of blustering or hectoring. Cf. *Henry V*, IV, i, 48: "I love the lovely *bully*."

SNOUT. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STAR. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOT. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear. 20

QUIN. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOT. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STAR. I fear it, I promise you.

BOT. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in, — God shield us! — a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living: and we ought to look to 't. 30

SNOUT. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOT. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — "Ladies," — or, "Fair ladies, — I would wish you,"

---

22 *eight and six*] in alternate verses of eight and six syllables, a common metre of ballads. The prologue, as spoken in Act V. i. 108 *seq.*, when the play is performed, is in alternately rhymed lines of ten syllables each. The piece, as rehearsed, bears small relation at this and other points to the actual performance.

## SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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— or, “I would request you,” — or, “I would entreat you, — not to fear, not to tremble : my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life : no, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men are :” and there indeed let him name his name, and tell 40 them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

QUIN. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things ; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber ; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play ?

BOT. A calendar, a calendar ! look in the almanac ; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUIN. Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOT. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the 50 moon may shine in at the casement.

QUIN. Ay ; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then, there is another thing : we must have a wall in the great chamber ; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom ?

BOT. Some man or other must present wall : and let 60 him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall ; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

## MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

---

QUIN. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

*Enter Puck behind*

PUCK. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,

So near the cradle of the fairy queen?

What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;

70

An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

QUIN. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOT. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet, —

QUIN. Odours, odours.

BOT. — odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.

But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear.

[*Exit.*

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here.

[*Exit.*

FLU. Must I speak now?

80

QUIN. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLU. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,

Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,

Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,

As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

---

85 *Jem*] See note on *L. L. L.*, III, i, 128.

## SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

QUIN. "Ninus' tomb," man : why, you must not speak that yet ; that you answer to Pyramus : you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter : your cue is past ; it is, "never tire."

FLU. O, — As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

*Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head*

BOT. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUIN. O monstrous ! O strange ! we are haunted. Pray, masters ! fly, masters ! Help !

*[Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.]*

PUCK. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,  
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through  
brier :

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire ;  
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,    100  
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. *[Exit.]*

BOT. Why do they run away ? this is a knavery of them to make me afraid.

*Re-enter SNOOT*

SNOOT. O Bottom, thou art changed ! what do I see on thee ?

BOT. What do you see ? you see an ass-head of your own, do you ? *[Exit Snout.]*

106 *an ass-head of your own*] a familiar *tu quoque*. Cf. *M. Wives*, I, iv, 114 : "You shall have a *fool's head of your own*." The transformation or "translation" of a man into an ass is the main topic of the popular Greek novel, *The Golden Ass*, of Apuleius, translated by William Adlington, 1566. Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584, and

## MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM<sup>act</sup> ACT III

---

*Re-enter QUINCE*

QUIN. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit.* 109]

BOT. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*]

The ousel cock so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,  
The throstle with his note so true,  
The wren with little quill;

TITA. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOT. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,  
The plain-song cuckoo gray, 120  
Whose note full many a man doth mark,  
And dares not answer nay; —

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry “cuckoo” never so?

TITA. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:

the prose history of *Dr. Faustus*, cap. xliii, both describe the magical change of a man's head into an ass's head. Shakespeare probably derived hints for Bottom's experience from all these sources.

117 *quill*] musical pipe, not feather, as sometimes interpreted.

120 *plain-song*] melody without variation or accompaniment; the epithet is appropriate to the monotonous note of the cuckoo.

123 *set his wit to*] would match his wit against. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, II, i, 84: “Will you *set your wit to* a fool's?”

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note ;  
 So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape ;  
 And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me  
 On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee. 129

BOT. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason  
 for that : and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep  
 little company together now-a-days ; the more the pity,  
 that some honest neighbours will not make them friends.  
 Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOT. Not so, neither : but if I had wit enough to get  
 out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITA. Out of this wood do not desire to go :  
 Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.  
 I am a spirit of no common rate : 140  
 The summer still doth tend upon my state ;  
 And I do love thee : therefore, go with me ;  
 I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee ;  
 And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
 And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep :  
 And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,  
 That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.  
 Peaseblossom ! Cobweb ! Moth ! and Mustardseed !

*Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDEED*

FIRST FAI. Ready.

SEC. FAI.                      And I.

THIRD FAI.                      And I.

FOURTH FAI.                      And I.

ALL.                                      Where shall we go ?



# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT III

TITA. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman ;    150  
 Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes ;  
 Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
 With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries ;  
 The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
 And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,  
 And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,  
 To have my love to bed and to arise ;  
 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,  
 To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes :  
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.    160

FIRST FAI. Hail, mortal !

SEC. FAI. Hail !

THIRD FAI. Hail !

FOURTH FAI. Hail !

BOT. I cry your worships mercy, heartily : I beseech  
 your worship's name.

COB. Cobweb.

BOT. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good  
 Master Cobweb : if I cut my finger, I shall make bold  
 with you. Your name, honest gentleman ?    170

PEAS. Peaseblossom.

BOT. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash,  
 your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father.  
 Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more  
 acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir ?

156 *fiery glow-worm's eyes*] Commentators invariably point out that the  
 glow-worm's light is in its tail, and that Shakespeare is here in error.

172 *Squash*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, v, 149 : " As a *squash* is before it is a  
*peascod*."

## SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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MUS. Mustardseed.

BOT. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well : that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house : I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITA. Come, wait upon him ; lead him to my bower. 182

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye ;  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,  
Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

*Enter OBERON*

OBE. I wonder if Titania be awaked ;  
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,  
Which she must dote on in extremity.

*Enter PUCK*

Here comes my messenger.

How now, mad spirit !  
What night-rule now about this haunted grove ?

---

177 *patience*] used ironically, mustard being credited with exciting anger or impatience.

186 *love's tongue*] Pope's emendation for the old reading *lover's tongue*, which is difficult to scan.

5 *night-rule*] night revelry. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II. iii 117 : " this uncivil *rule*."



SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

When in that moment, so it came to pass,  
Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

OBE. This falls out better than I could devise.  
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes  
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do ?

PUCK. I took him sleeping, — that is finish'd too, —  
And the Athenian woman by his side ;  
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed. 40

*Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS*

OBE. Stand close : this is the same Athenian.

PUCK. This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEM. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so ?  
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HER. Now I but chide ; but I should use thee worse,  
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.  
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,  
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,  
And kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day 50  
As he to me : would he have stolen away  
From sleeping Hermia ? I'll believe as soon  
This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon  
May through the centre creep, and so displease  
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.  
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him ;  
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

---

57 *dead*] *deadly*. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, I, i, 71 : "So dull, so *dead* in look,  
so woe-begone."

DEM. So should the murder'd look ; and so should I,  
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty :  
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 60  
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HER. What 's this to my Lysander? where is he?  
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEM. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HER. Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the  
bounds  
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?  
Henceforth be never number'd among men!  
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!  
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,  
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch! 70  
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?  
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue  
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEM. You spend your passion on a misprised mood:  
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;  
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HER. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEM. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

HER. A privilege, never to see me more.

---

72 *doubler tongue*] See note on II, ii, 9, *supra*: "Snakes with *double* [i. e. forked] tongue." There is a play here on the word "double" in the sense of "deceitful" as well as in that of "forked."

74 *on a misprised mood*] on a fit of anger caused by a mistake. "Misprision" (line 90, *infra*) means "mistake." "Mood" is not uncommonly used by Shakespeare in the sense of "anger" or "fit of anger."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And from thy hated presence part I so :  
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. 80 *[Exit.]*

DEM. There is no following her in this fierce  
vein:

Here therefore for a while I will remain.  
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow  
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe ;  
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,  
If for his tender here I make some stay.

*[Lies down and sleeps.]*

OBE. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken  
quite,

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight :  
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue 90  
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding  
troth,

A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBE. About the wood go swifter than the wind,  
And Helena of Athens look thou find :  
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,  
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear :  
By some illusion see thou bring her here :  
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK. I go, I go ; look how I go, 100  
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. *[Exit.]*

96 *fancy-sick*] See note on I, i, 155, *supra*.

101 *Tartar's bow*] Probably an Ovidian reminiscence. Cf. *Met.*, X.  
588 : "*Scythicâ non setius sagittâ*," rendered by Golding, "as swift  
as arrow from a Turkey bow." *Tartar's bow* is a more accurate  
rendering of the Latin.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT III

---

OBE.    Flower of this purple dye,  
         Hit with Cupid's archery,  
         Sink in apple of his eye.  
         When his love he doth espy,  
         Let her shine as gloriously  
         As the Venus of the sky.  
         When thou wakest, if she be by,  
         Beg of her for remedy.

*Re-enter Puck*

PUCK.    Captain of our fairy band, 110

         Helena is here at hand ;  
         And the youth, mistook by me,  
         Pleading for a lover's fee.  
         Shall we their fond pageant see ?  
         Lord, what fools these mortals be !

OBE.    Stand aside : the noise they make  
         Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK.    Then will two at once woo one ;  
         That must needs be sport alone ;  
         And those things do best please me 120  
         That befall preposterously.

*Enter LYSANDER and HELENA*

LYS.    Why should you think that I should woo in  
         scorn ?

         Scorn and derision never come in tears :  
Look, when I vow, I weep ; and vows so born,  
         In their nativity all truth appears.

## SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,  
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HEL. You do advance your cunning more and  
more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!  
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er? 130

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:  
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,  
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.

LYS. I had no judgement when to her I swore.

HEL. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her  
o'er.

LYS. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEM. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect,  
divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?  
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show  
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow! 140  
That pure congealed white, high 'Taurus' snow,  
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow  
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss  
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HEL. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent  
To set against me for your merriment:  
If you were civil and knew courtesy,  
You would not do me thus much injury.

---

144 *princess of pure white*] That which is the most excellent of its kind may easily be called the *princess* of its kind. Suggested emendations, *e. g.* *pureness*, *impress* (*i. e.* *crest*), and others, may be neglected.





## SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

LYS.                Helen, it is not so.

DEM. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,  
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.  
Look, where thy love comes ; yonder is thy dear.

*Re-enter HERMIA*

HER. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,  
The ear more quick of apprehension makes ;  
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,  
It pays the hearing double recompence. 180  
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found ;  
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.  
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so ?

LYS. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to  
go ?

HER. What love could press Lysander from my side ?

LYS. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,  
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night  
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.  
Why seek'st thou me ? could not this make thee know,  
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so ? 190

HER. You speak not as you think : it cannot be.

HEL. Lo, she is one of this confederacy !  
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three  
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.  
Injurious Hermia ! most ungrateful maid !  
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived  
To bait me with this foul derision ?  
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

---

188 *fiery oes*] circles of fire, stars.

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,  
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200  
 For parting us, — O, is all forgot ?  
 All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence ?  
 We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,  
 Have with our needles created both one flower,  
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;  
 As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,  
 Had been incorporate. So we grew together,  
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
 But yet an union in partition ; 210  
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem ;  
 So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart ;  
 Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,  
 Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.  
 And will you rent our ancient love asunder,  
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend ?  
 It is not friendly, 't is not maidenly :  
 Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,  
 Though I alone do feel the injury.

HER. I am amazed at your passionate words. 220  
 I scorn you not : it seems that you scorn me.

HEL. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,  
 To follow me and praise my eyes and face ?  
 And made your other love, Demetrius,  
 Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,

---

213–214 *Two of the first, . . . crest*] Our two bodies resemble two coats of arms in heraldry, which belong to a single person, and are surrounded by a single crest.

## SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,  
 Precious, celestial ? Wherefore speaks he this  
 To her he hates ? and wherefore doth Lysander  
 Deny your love, so rich within his soul,  
 And tender me, forsooth, affection, 230  
 But by your setting on, by your consent ?  
 What though I be not so in grace as you,  
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate,  
 But miserable most, to love unloved ?  
 This you should pity rather than despise.

HER. I understand not what you mean by this.

HEL. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,  
 Make mouths upon me when I turn my back ;  
 Wink each at other ; hold the sweet jest up :  
 This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled. 240  
 If you have any pity, grace, or manners,  
 You would not make me such an argument.  
 But fare ye well : 't is partly my own fault ;  
 Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYS. Stay, gentle Helena ; hear my excuse :  
 My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena !

HEL. O excellent !

HER. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEM. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYS. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat :  
 Thy threats have no more strength than her weak  
 prayers. 250

Helen, I love thee ; by my life, I do :

---

250 *prayers*] Theobald's emendation for the old meaningless reading *praise*.

I swear by that which I will lose for thee,  
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEM. I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYS. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEM. Quick, come!

HER. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYS. Away, you Ethiope!

DEM. No, no; he'll . . .

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,

But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

LYS. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let  
loose,

260

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

HER. Why are you grown so rude? what change is  
this?

Sweet love, —

257 *Ethiope*] Sneering allusion to Hermia's brunette complexion. Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 268: "And *Ethiopes* of their sweet complexion crack."

257-258 *No, no; he'll . . . loose;*] In the first Quarto this difficult passage read: "No, no; heele seeme to breake loose." In the First Folio *Sir* is substituted for *hee*, and the line ends at *loose*. Perhaps some words have dropped out. It is difficult to make logical sense of these abrupt expressions. Demetrius denounces Lysander with angry incoherence, in a general sense anticipating his "I'll not trust your word" of line 268, *infra*. First addressing the forsaken Hermia, he now says in effect: "I don't believe Lysander; he'll say anything. He is only pretending to give you up." Then, turning to face his rival Lysander, he adds threateningly: "Behave honestly; take the course that you propose to follow and stick to it; yet don't cross my path (unless at your peril). You are a spiritless, contemptible fellow. Get out of my way."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

LYS. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!  
 Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!

HER. Do you not jest?

HEL. Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYS. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEM. I would I had your bond, for I perceive  
 A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

LYS. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her  
 dead?

Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. 270

HER. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?  
 Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!  
 Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?  
 I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you loved me; yet since night you left  
 me:

Why, then you left me, — O, the gods forbid! —  
 In earnest, shall I say?

LYS. Ay, by my life;  
 And never did desire to see thee more.  
 Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;  
 Be certain, nothing truer; 't is no jest 280  
 That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

HER. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!  
 You thief of love! what, have you come by night  
 And stolen my love's heart from him?

HEL. Fine, i' faith!  
 Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,

---

272 *what news, my love!*] what new-fangled notion. Collier's emenda-  
 tion, *what means my love?* is unnecessary.

No touch of bashfulness ? What, will you tear  
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue ?  
Fie, fie ! you counterfeit, you puppet. you !

HER. Puppet ? why so ? ay, that way goes the game.  
Now I perceive that she hath made compare 290  
Between our statures ; she hath urged her height ;  
And with her personage, her tall personage,  
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.  
And are you grown so high in his esteem,  
Because I am so dwarfish and so low ?  
How low am I, thou painted maypole ? speak ;  
How low am I ? I am not yet so low  
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HEL. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,  
Let her not hurt me : I was never curst ; 300  
I have no gift at all in shrewishness ;  
I am a right maid for my cowardice :  
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,  
Because she is something lower than myself,  
That I can match her.

HER. Lower ! hark, again.

HEL. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.  
I evermore did love you, Hermia,  
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you ;  
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,  
I told him of your stealth unto this wood. 310  
He follow'd you ; for love I follow'd him ;  
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me  
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too :  
And now, so you will let me quiet go,

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

To Athens will I bear my folly back,  
And follow you no further: let me go:

You see how simple and how fond I am.

HER. Why, get you gone : who is 't that hinders you?

HEL. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HER. What, with Lysander?

HEL. With Demetrius. 320

Lys. Be not afraid ; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEM. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HEL. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!

She was a vixen when she went to school ;

And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HER. Little again ! nothing but low and little !

Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?

Let me come to her.

LYS.           Get you gone, you dwarf;

You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made ;

You bead, you acorn.

DEM. You are too officious 330

In her behalf that scorns your services.

Let her alone: speak not of Helena;

'Take not her part ; for, if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her,

'Thou shalt aby it.

Lys.            Now she holds me not ;

329 *knot-grass*] a reference to "knot-grass," a straggling, many jointed weed, which was supposed when eaten to check a child's growth. Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher, *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, II, 2: "Should they put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 't were worse than *knot-grass* ; *he would never grow after it.*"



# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,  
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEM. Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*]

HER. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:  
Nay, go not back.

HEL. I will not trust you, I, 340  
Nor longer stay in your curst company.  
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,  
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*]

HER. I am amazed, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*]

OBE. This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,  
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.  
Did not you tell me I should know the man  
By the Athenian garments he had on?

And so far blameless proves my enterprise, 350  
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;  
And so far am I glad it so did sort,  
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBE. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:  
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;  
The starry welkin cover thou anon  
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;  
And lead these testy rivals so astray,  
As one come not within another's way.

357 *Acheron*] a river of Hades (not, as Shakespeare describes it in *Macb.*, III, v, 15, "a pit"). "Blackness" was an invariable characteristic of the river. Cf. Verg. *Æn.*, vi, 107, "*Tenebrosa palus Acheronte refuso*," and Milton, *Par. Lost*, II, 578, "Sad Acheron of sorrow *black* and deep."

SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, 360  
 Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong ;  
 And sometime rail thou like Demetrius ;  
 And from each other look thou lead them thus,  
 Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
 With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep :  
 Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye ;  
 Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,  
 To take from thence all error with his might,  
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.  
 When they next wake, all this derision 370  
 Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision ;  
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,  
 With league whose date till death shall never end.  
 Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,  
 I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy ;  
 And then I will her charmed eye release  
 From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,  
 For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,  
 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ; 380  
 At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,  
 Troop home to churchyards : damned spirits all,  
 That in crossways and floods have burial,  
 Already to their wormy beds are gone ;  
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon,  
 They wilfully themselves exile from light,  
 And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

---

379 See note *infra*, V, i, 373 ("Hecate's team").



SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy  
head?

PUCK. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,  
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,  
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou  
child;

I'll whip thee with a rod : he is defiled  
That draws a sword on thee.

DEM.                                   Yea, art thou there ?

PUCK. Follow my voice : we'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt.*

*Re-enter* LYSANDER

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on :  
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.  
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I :  
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly ;  
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,  
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle  
day !

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,  
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.* 420

*Re-enter* PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEM. Abide me, if thou darest ; for well I wot  
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,  
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.  
Where art thou now ?

PUCK. Come hither : I am here.

**MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT III**

DEM. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy  
this dear,

If ever I thy face by daylight see:

Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me

To measure out my length on this cold bed.

By day's approach look to be visited. 430

[Lies down and sleeps.]

*Re-enter* HELENA

HEL. O weary night, O long and tedious night,

Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,

That I may back to Athens by daylight,

From these that my poor company detest :

And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,

Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[Lies down and sleeps.]

**PUCK.** Yet but three? Come one more;

Two of both kinds makes up four.

Here she comes, curst and sad :

Cupid is a knavish lad,

Thus to make poor females mad.

*Re-enter* HERMIA

HER. Never so weary, never so in woe ;

Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briars ;

I can no further crawl, no further go ;

My legs can keep no pace with my desires.

Here will I rest me till the break of day.

Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray !

[Lies down and sleeps.

SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

PUCK.            On the ground

Sleep sound :

I 'll apply

450

To your eye,

Gentle lover, remedy.

*[Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eye.]*

When thou wakest

Thou takest

True delight

In the sight

Of thy former lady's eye :

And the country proverb known,

That every man should take his own,

In your waking shall be shown :

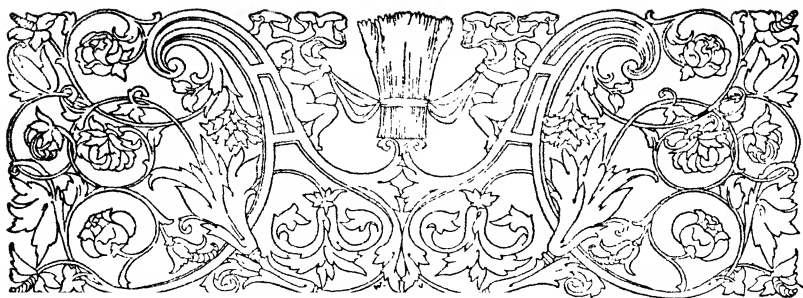
460

Jack shall have Jill ;

Nought shall go ill ;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

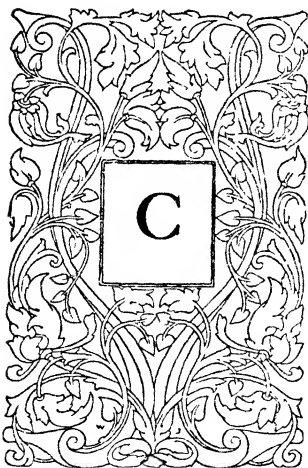
*[Exit.]*



ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—THE SAME  
*LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, AND HERMIA,*  
*LYING ASLEEP*

*Enter* TITANIA *and* BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARD-  
 SEED, *and other* Fairies *attending*; OBERON *behind unseen*

TITANIA



OME, SIT THEE DOWN  
 upon this flowery bed,  
 While I thy amiable cheeks do  
 coy,  
 And stick musk-roses in thy  
 sleek smooth head,  
 And kiss thy fair large ears, my  
 gentle joy.

BOT. Where's Peaseblossom?

PEAS. Ready.

BOT. Scratch my head, Pease-  
 blossom. Where's Mounsieur  
 Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

BOT. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you  
 your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped

2 *amiable cheeks do coy*] caress thy lovely cheeks.

SCENE I      MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

humble-bee on the top of a thistle ; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur ; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not ; I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed ?

MUS. Ready.

BOT. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

MUS. What's your will ?

20

BOT. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur ; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face ; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

TITA. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love ?

BOT. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

TITA. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOT. Truly, a peck of provender : I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to 30 a bottle of hay : good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITA. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOT. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me : I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

30 *bottle*] bundle or measure of hay. Cf. Cotgrave's *Fr.-Engl. Dict.* :

"Boteau, a bundle or *bottle*, as of hay," etc.





SCENE I      MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

I then did ask of her her changeling child ;  
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent  
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.

And now I have the boy, I will undo

This hateful imperfection of her eyes :

60

And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp

From off the head of this Athenian swain ;

That, he awaking when the other do,

May all to Athens back again repair,

And think no more of this night's accidents

But as the fierce vexation of a dream.

But first I will release the fairy queen.

Be as thou wast wont to be ;

See as thou wast wont to see :

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower

70

Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania ; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITA. My Oberon ! what visions have I seen !

Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBE. There lies your love.

TITA. How came these things to pass ?

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now !

OBE. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.

Titania, music call ; and strike more dead

Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

---

70 *Dian's bud*] The part of the vitex agnus castus, leaves of which were believed to insure chastity in those who tasted them. Chaucer, who in his *Flower and the Leaf*, ll. 472-475, represents Dian, goddess of chastity, as bearing a branch of the "agnus castus" in her hand. "Cupid's flower" is the pansy, which already has been mentioned under the name of "love-in-idleness," II, i, 168, *supra*.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT IV

TITA. Music, ho ! music, such as charmeth sleep ! 80  
*[Music, still.]*

PUCK. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's  
 eyes peep.

OBE. Sound, music ! Come, my queen, take hands  
 with me,

And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity,

And will to-morrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair prosperity :

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with 'Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK. Fairy king, attend, and mark : 90  
 I do hear the morning lark.

OBE. Then, my queen, in silence sad,  
 Trip we after night's shade :  
 We the globe can compass soon,  
 Swifter than the wandering moon.

TITA. Come, my lord ; and in our flight,  
 Tell me how it came this night,  
 That I sleeping here was found  
 With these mortals on the ground. *[Exeunt.]*  
*[Horns winded within.]*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

THE. Go, one of you, find out the forester ; 100  
 For now our observation is perform'd ;

101 *observation*] *sc.* of the rites of May-day. Cf. I, i, 167, *supra*,  
 "Observance to a morn of May," and line 130, *infra*, "to observe  
 The rite of May."

SCENE I      MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

And since we have the vaward of the day,  
 My love shall hear the music of my hounds.  
 Uncouple in the western valley ; let them go :  
 Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.      [*Exit an attend.*]  
 We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,  
 And mark the musical confusion  
 Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIP. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,  
 When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear      110  
 With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear  
 Such gallant chiding ; for, besides the groves,  
 The skies, the fountains, every region near  
 Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard  
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THE. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,  
 So flew'd, so sanded ; and their heads are hung  
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew ;  
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls ;  
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,      120  
 Each under each. A cry more tuneable  
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,  
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly :  
 Judge when you hear. But, soft ! what nymphs are these ?

EGE. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep ;  
 And this, Lysander ; this Demetrius is ;  
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena :  
 I wonder of their being here together.

---

117 *flew'd*] Cf. Ov., *Met.*, III (Golding's translation, leaf 33 a, last line) : " a great and large *flew'd* (*i. e.* with hanging chaps) hound."

THE. No doubt they rose up early to observe  
The rite of May ; and, hearing our intent, 130  
Came here in grace of our solemnity.  
But speak, Egeus ; is not this the day  
That Hermia should give answer of her choice ?

EGE. It is, my lord.

THE. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their  
horns. [*Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem.,  
Hel., and Her., wake and start up.*]

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past :  
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now ?

LYS. Pardon, my lord.

THE. I pray you all, stand up.  
I know you two are rival enemies :  
How comes this gentle concord in the world, 140  
That hatred is so far from jealousy,  
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity ?

LYS. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,  
Half sleep, half waking : but as yet, I swear,  
I cannot truly say how I came here ;  
But, as I think, — for truly would I speak,  
And now I do bethink me, so it is, —  
I came with Hermia hither : our intent  
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,  
Without the peril of the Athenian law. 150

144 *Half sleep, half waking :*] “Sleep” and “waking” are substantives, the objects of the verb “reply.” “He speaks holiday” (*M. Wives*, III, ii, 59) is a similar construction.

149 *where we might*] This is the obviously right reading of the first Quarto, which was wrongly altered in the second Quarto and Folios to *where we might be*.

EGE. Enough, enough, my lord ; you have enough :  
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.  
They would have stolen away ; they would, Demetrius,  
Thereby to have defeated you and me,  
You of your wife and me of my consent,  
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEM. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,  
Of this their purpose hither to this wood ;  
And I in fury hither follow'd them,  
Fair Helena in fancy following me. 160  
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power, —  
But by some power it is, — my love to Hermia,  
Melted as the snow, seems to me now  
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,  
Which in my childhood I did dote upon ;  
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,  
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,  
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,  
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia :  
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food ; 170  
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,  
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,  
And will for evermore be true to it.

THE. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met :  
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.  
Egeus, I will overbear your will ;  
For in the temple, by and by, with us  
These couples shall eternally be knit :

---

160 *fancy*] love. Cf. I, i, 155, *supra*, and note.

And, for the morning now is something worn,  
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside. 18  
Away with us to Athens! three and three,  
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train.*]

DEM. These things seem small and undistinguishable,  
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

HER. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,  
When every thing seems double.

HEL. So methinks:  
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,  
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEM. Are you sure  
That we are awake? It seems to me 190  
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think  
The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HER. Yea; and my father.

HEL. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEM. Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him;  
And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*]

BOT. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and  
I will answer: my next is, "Most fair Pyramus."  
Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender!

186 *with parted eye*] with eye out of focus, which sees two objects when only one is present.

188 *found . . . like a jewel*] Hermia compares herself to one who, finding a jewel by accident, is uncertain whether he ought to retain it or no, is not sure whether the jewel is his own property or another's.

189-190 *Are you sure . . . awake?*] This query is only found in the Quartos.

## SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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Snout, the tinker ! Starveling ! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep ! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was : man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, — and methought I had, — but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream : it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom ; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke : peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [Exit. 213

### SCENE II — ATHENS

#### QUINCE'S HOUSE

*Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING*

QUIN. Have you sent to Bottom's house ? is he come home yet ?

STAR. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

---

213 *at her death*] obviously at Thisbe's death in the play.

4 *transported*] Apparently an echo of Quince's "thou art translated," i. e. "transformed" (III, i, 108, *supra*). Starveling cannot but believe that Bottom has been "transported to the next world," i. e.



MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT IV

---

FLU. If he come not, then the play is marred : it goes not forward, doth it ?

QUIN. It is not possible : you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLU. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

QUIN. Yea, and the best person too ; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLU. You must say “paragon” : a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

*Enter SNUG*

SNUG. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married : if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLU. O sweet bully Bottom ! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life ; he could not have scaped sixpence a day : an the Duke had not given him six- 20  
pence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged ; he would have deserved it : sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

*Enter BOTTOM*

BOT. Where are these lads ? where are these hearts ?

QUIN. Bottom ! O most courageous day ! O most happy hour !

BOT. Masters, I am to discourse wonders : but ask me not what ; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

---

“killed,” in which sense the word is used in *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 64.

## SCENE II    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

QUIN. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOT. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, <sup>30</sup>  
that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together,  
good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your  
pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look  
o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is  
preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen;  
and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for  
they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most  
dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter  
sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them  
say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go,  
away!

[*Exeunt.*    40]

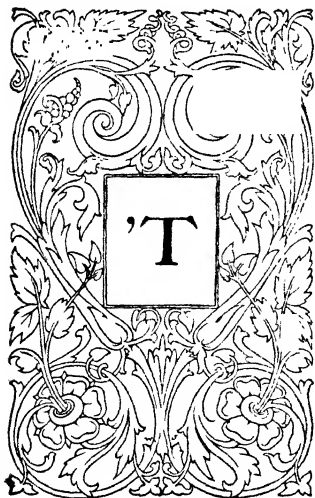


## ACT FIFTH—SCENE I—ATHENS

### *THE PALACE OF THESEUS*

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, and Attendants*

HIPPOLYTA



IS STRANGE, MY THESEUS, that these lovers speak of.

THE. More strange than true :  
I never may believe  
These antique fables, nor these  
fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such  
seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever  
comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the  
Are of imagination all compact : [poet

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,  
That is, the madman : the lover, all as frantic,

10

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt :  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to  
                  heaven ;

And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,  
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy ;  
Or in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush supposed a bear !

HIP. But all the story of the night told over,  
 And all their minds transfigured so together,  
 More witnesseth than fancy's images,  
 And grows to something of great constancy ;  
 But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

THE. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

*Enter* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA

Joy, gentle friends ! joy and fresh days of love  
Accompany your hearts !

Lys. More than to us 30

Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed !

THE. Come now; what masques, what dances shall  
we have,

11 *a brow of Egypt*] a brow of a gipsy.

To wear away this long age of three hours  
 Between our after-supper and bed-time ?  
 Where is our usual manager of mirth ?  
 What revels are in hand ? Is there no play,  
 To ease the anguish of a torturing hour ?  
 Call Philostrate.

PHIL. Here, mighty Theseus.

THE. Say, what abridgement have you for this  
 evening ?

What masque ? what music ? How shall we beguile 40  
 The lazy time, if not with some delight ?

PHIL. There is a brief how many sports are  
 ripe :

Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*]

THE. [*reads*] The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung  
 By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.

We'll none of that : that have I told my love,  
 In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

[*Reads*] The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
 Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.

That is an old device ; and it was play'd 50  
 When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

---

34 *after-supper*] Cf. Cotgrave's *Fr.-Engl. Dict.* : "Regoubillonner, to make a *reare supper*, steale an *after supper*."

42 *ripe*] This obvious correct reading is in the First Quarto alone, and is wrongly altered elsewhere to *rife*.

44-49 The references both to "the Centaurs" and to "the Thracian singer" Orpheus are reminiscences of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. See Bks. XII and XI, respectively.

# SCENE I      MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

[*Reads*] The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.

That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

[*Reads*] A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord? 60

PHIL. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious; for in all the play

There is not one word apt, one player fitted:

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed. 70

THE. What are they that do play it?

PHIL. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,

Which never labour'd in their minds till now;

And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories

52 *The thrice three Muses*] Probably an allusion to the *Tears of the Muses*, a poem by Edmund Spenser, lamenting the decay of literature, which was published in 1591.

59 *wondrous strange snow*] a tautological echo of hot ice. For "wondrous strange," cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 164: "O day and night, but this is *wondrous strange!*" and *3 Hen. VI*, II, i, 33: "'T is *wondrous strange*, the like yet never heard of."

74 *toil'd . . . memories*] wearied out their unpractised memories.

With this same play, against your nuptial.

THE. And we will hear it.

PHIL. No, my noble lord ;  
It is not for you : I have heard it over,  
And it is nothing, nothing in the world ;  
Unless you can find sport in their intents,  
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,  
To do you service.

80

THE. I will hear that play ;  
For never any thing can be amiss,  
When simpleness and duty tender it.  
Go, bring them in : and take your places, ladies.

[*Exit Philostrate.*]

HIP. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,  
And duty in his service perishing.

THE. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such  
thing.

HIP. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THE. The kinder we, to give them thanks for  
nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake :  
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect  
Takes it in might, not merit.

90

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed  
To greet me with premeditated welcomes ;  
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,

88 *in this kind*] See note, I, i, 54. *supra* ; cf. V, i., 210, *infra*.

91-92 *And what . . . merit*] And any genuine effort to please is welcomed by the magnanimous for its good intention without regard to its intrinsic merit.

# SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

Make periods in the midst of sentences,  
 Throttle their practised accent in their fears,  
 And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,  
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,  
 Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome ; 100  
 And in the modesty of fearful duty  
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue  
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.  
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity  
 In least speak most, to my capacity.

*Re-enter PHILOSTRATE*

PHIL. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.  
 THE. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*]

*Enter QUINCE for the Prologue*

PRO. If we offend, it is with our good will.  
     That you should think, we come not to offend,  
 But with good will. To show our simple skill, 110  
     That is the true beginning of our end.  
 Consider, then, we come but in despite.  
     We do not come, as minding to content you,  
 Our true intent is. All for your delight,  
     We are not here. That you should here repent you,  
 The actors are at hand ; and, by their show,  
 You shall know all, that you are like to know.

THE. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt ; he

108 *seq.*] Mispunctuation gives these lines a sense opposite to that which is intended. A like comic device is employed in the old farce *Ralph Roister Doister*, III, 4.



# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT V

knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord : it is not enough to speak, but to speak true. 121

HIP. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder ; a sound, but not in government.

THE. His speech was like a tangled chain ; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next ?

*Enter PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, and LION*

PRO. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show ;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know ;  
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present 130  
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder ;  
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,  
Presenteth Moonshine ; for, if you will know,  
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn  
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,  
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,  
Did scare away, or rather did affright ; 140  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,  
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain :  
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast ;

145-146 *Whereat . . . breast*] Shakespeare has already ridiculed the practice of alliteration in *L. L. L.*, IV, ii, 52 : "I will some thing affect the letter," etc.

# SCENE I      MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
 His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
 Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
 At large discourse, while here they do remain. 150

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*]

THE. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEM. No wonder, my lord : one lion may, when many  
 asses do.

WALL. In this same interlude it doth befall  
 That I, one Snout by name, present a wall ;  
 And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
 That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
 Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
 Did whisper often very secretly.  
 This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show 160  
 That I am that same wall ; the truth is so :  
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THE. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better ?

DEM. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard dis-  
 course, my lord.

THE. Pyramus draws near the wall : silence !

*Re-enter PYRAMUS*

PYR. O grim-look'd night ! O night with hue so black !

O night, which ever art when day is not !

O night, O night ! alack, alack, alack, 170

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot !

157-162 *crannied hole . . . cranny*] This feature of Thisbe's story is  
 derived directly from Ovid's *Met.*, IV, 65-69 : "Fissus erat tenui  
 rima," etc., rendered by Golding thus : "A wall that parted house  
 from house have riven therein a *crany*."

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,  
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!  
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,  
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

[Wall holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what do I see? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THE. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse  
again. 180

PYR. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving  
me" is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to  
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat  
as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*Re-enter THISBE*

THIS. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,  
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,  
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYR. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,  
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. 190  
Thisby!

THIS. My love thou art, my love I think.

PYR. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;  
And, like *Limander*, am I trusty still.

THIS. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

195-196 *Limander* . . . *Helen*] A blunder apparently for *Leander* and  
*Hero*.

PYR. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THIS. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYR. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THIS. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

200

PYR. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THIS. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*]

WALL. Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus wall away doth go.

[*Exit.*]

THE. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEM. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIP. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

209

THE. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIP. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THE. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

197-198 *Shafalus to Procrus*] A blunder for Cephalus and Procris, whose story of constant love is in Ovid's *Met.*, VII. A poem on the subject was entered in the Stationers' Register, 1593. The only copy known to be extant is dated 1595.

205 *Now is the mural down*] This is Pope's emendation of the obviously erroneous readings of the early editions. The Quartos read, *moon used*. "The Folios' alteration, *morall donne*, justifies Pope's correction.

210 *in this kind*] See note, I, i, 54, *supra*; cf. V, i, 88.

*Re-enter LION and MOONSHINE*

LION. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
 The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
 May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
 When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.  
 Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am 220  
 A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam ;  
 For, if I should as lion come in strife  
 Into this place, 't were pity on my life.

THE. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEM. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I  
 saw.

LYS. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THE. True ; and a goose for his discretion.

DEM. Not so, my lord ; for his valour cannot carry  
 his discretion ; and the fox carries the goose.

THE. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his  
 valour ; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well :  
 leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon. 232

MOON. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ; —

DEM. He should have worn the horns on his  
 head.

THE. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible  
 within the circumference.

MOON. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ;  
 Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THE. This is the greatest error of all the rest : the  
 man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the  
 man i' the moon ? 241

221 *A lion-fell*] a lion's skin (not a real lion).

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

DEM. He dares not come there for the candle ; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIP. I am aweary of this moon : would he would change !

THE. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane ; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYS. Proceed, Moon.

249

MOON. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon ; I, the man i' the moon ; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush ; and this dog, my dog.

DEM. Why, all these should be in the lantern ; for all these are in the moon. But, silence ! here comes Thisbe.

*Re-enter THISBE*

THIS. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love ?

LION. [*Roaring*] Oh —

[*Thisbe runs off.*]

DEM. Well roared, Lion.

THE. Well run, Thisbe.

HIP. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*]

THE. Well moused, Lion.

261

DEM. And then came Pyramus.

LYS. And so the lion vanished.

---

243 *in snuff*] See note on *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 22.

262-263 *And then . . . vanished*] It has been suggested that these lines ought to be reversed. But Lysander may be reminding Demetrius of a point that he had omitted to mention.

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM    ACT V

*Re-enter PYRAMUS*

PYR. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams ;  
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright ;  
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,  
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite !  
But mark, poor knight,  
What dreadful dole is here ! 270  
Eyes, do you see ?  
How can it be ?  
O dainty duck ! O dear !  
Thy mantle good,  
What, stain'd with blood !  
Approach, ye Furies fell !  
O Fates, come, come,  
Cut thread and thrum ;  
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !

THE. This passion, and the death of a dear friend,  
would go near to make a man look sad. 281

HIP. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYR. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame ?  
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear :  
Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame  
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.

Come, tears, confound ;  
Out, sword, and wound  
The pap of Pyramus ;  
Ay, that left pap, 290  
Where heart doth hop : [Stabs himself.]  
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

---

266 *gleams*] The Quartos and First Folio read *beames*, a careless repetition of line 264. The other Folios read *streams*. *Gleams* is Knight's conjecture.

SCENE I    MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

---

Now am I dead,  
Now am I fled ;  
My soul is in the sky :  
Tongue, lose thy light ;  
Moon, take thy flight : [*Exit Moonshine.*  
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

DEM. No die, but an ace, for him ; for he is but one.

LYS. Less than an ace, man ; for he is dead ; he is  
nothing. 301

THE. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

HIP. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover ?

THE. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes ; and her passion ends the play.

*Re-enter THISBE*

HIP. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus : I hope she will be brief. 309

DEM. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better ; he for a man, God warrant us ; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYS. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

---

299 *No die, but an ace*] A play upon words which depends on "ace" and "ass," being given the same sound in pronunciation.

311-312 *he for a man . . . God bless us*] These words only appear in the Quartos, and were omitted from the Folios, perhaps on account of the statute of 1605, which prohibited the use of the name of God on the stage.



DEM. And thus she means, videlicet : —

THIS.

Asleep, my love ?

What, dead, my dove ?

O Pyramus, arise !

Speak, speak. Quite dumb ?

Dead, dead ? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes. 320

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone :

Lovers, make moan :

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three,

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk :

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore 330

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word :

Come, trusty sword ;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue : [*Stabs herself.*

And, farewell, friends ;

Thus Thisby ends :

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

[*Dies.*

THE. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEM. Ay, and Wall too.

340

BOT. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you ; the wall is down  
that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the

314 *means*] This is the original reading, and Theobald's emendation of *moans* is unnecessary. "Means" was itself often used in the sense of "lament." But its union here with "videlicet" suggests that the sense is, "she has that meaning," "she takes it seriously."

epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THE. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance.* 351

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:

Lovers, to bed; 't is almost fairy time.

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,

As much as we this night have overwatch'd.

This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled

The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity,

In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* PUCK

PUCK. Now the hungry lion roars,

360

And the wolf behowls the moon;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,

All with weary task fordone.

Now the wasted brands do glow,

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,

---

357 *gait*] march. Cf. l. 405, *infra*, "take his *gait*," i. e., take his march, go away.

361 *behowls*] The emendation of Warburton which Theobald accepted for the original *beholds*.

Puts the wretch that lies in woe  
 In remembrance of a shroud.  
 Now it is the time of night,  
 That the graves, all gaping wide,  
 Every one lets forth his sprite,  
 In the church-way paths to glide :  
 And we fairies, that do run  
 By the triple Hecate's team,  
 From the presence of the sun,  
 Following darkness like a dream,  
 Now are frolic : not a mouse  
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house :  
 I am sent with broom before,  
 To sweep the dust behind the door.

370

*Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train*

OBE. Through the house give glimmering light,  
 By the dead and drowsy fire :

380

368-369 *Now . . . wide*] Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 378-379 :

“ ’T is now the witching time of night,  
 When churchyards yawn,” etc.

373 *triple Hecate's*] Hecate is here a dissyllable. The epithet “triple” is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the goddess Hecate is called “triformis dea” (vii, 94), and “triceps Hecate” (vii, 194). Both epithets appear in Golding as “triple.” The epithet is commonly explained by the fact that the goddess has a threefold sovereignty over heaven, earth, and hell, under the respective names of Luna, Diana, and Hecate. In the present text she figures as goddess of the infernal regions or darkness, whose “team” consists of dragons. “Triple Hecate's team” is thus equivalent to “night's swift dragons,” III, ii, 379, *supra*.

380-381 *Through . . . fire*] Through the house shed gleams of light,

Every elf and fairy sprite

Hop as light as bird from brier ;

And this ditty, after me,

Sing, and dance it trippingly.

TITA. First, rehearse your song by rote,

To each word a warbling note :

Hand in hand, with fairy grace,

Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance.*

OBE. Now, until the break of day,  
Through this house each fairy stray.

390

To the best bride-bed will we,

Which by us shall blessed be ;

And the issue there create

Ever shall be fortunate.

So shall all the couples three

Ever true in loving be ;

And the blots of Nature's hand

Shall not in their issue stand ;

Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,

400

Nor mark prodigious, such as are

Despised in nativity,

Shall upon their children be.

With this field-dew consecrate,

Every fairy take his gait ;

---

with the aid of the drooping fire. For *through* it has been proposed needlessly to read *though*, and to substitute a comma for a colon at "fire." The meaning would then be : "Though the house is almost in darkness, (still) by the light of the dead fire," etc.

405 *gait*] See note on l. 357, *supra*.

And each several chamber bless,  
Through this palace, with sweet peace,  
Ever shall in safety rest,  
And the owner of it blest.  
Trip away ; make no stay ;  
Meet me all by break of day.

410

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.*]

PUCK. If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended,  
That you have but slumber'd here,  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,  
No more yielding but a dream,  
Gentles, do not reprehend :  
If you pardon, we will mend.  
And, as I am an honest Puck,  
If we have unearned luck  
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,  
We will make amends ere long ;  
Else the Puck a liar call :  
So, good night unto you all.  
Give me your hands, if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends.

420

[*Exit.*]

---

420 *an honest Puck*] Puck, or "the Puck" (as at line 424), is a title usually conferred in contemporary literature on an evil spirit who is incapable of honesty. The speaker deprecates complete identification with ordinary creatures of his name.

421-422 *unearned . . . tongue*] luck that we have not earned (or deserved) of being dismissed without hisses.

426 *Give . . . hands*] Clap hands, give a round of applause.









THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

ELEANOR F. BRICKDALE

*P*ROLOGUE. — Off with my boots, you rogues!  
you thieves!

# THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

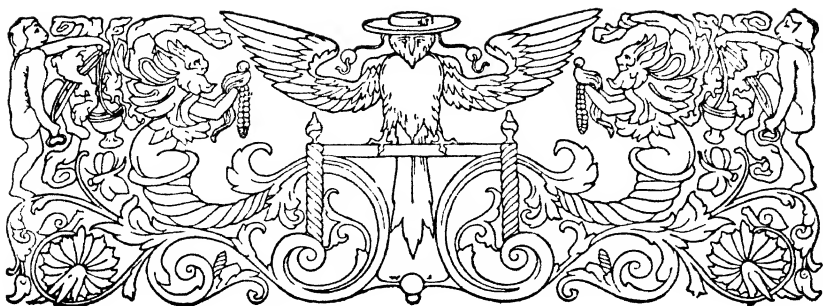
WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY ALICE MEYNELL  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY ELEANOR F. BRICKDALE



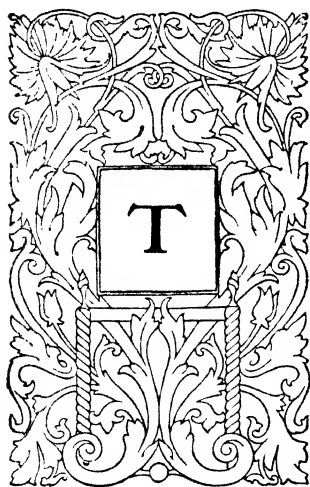
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## INTRODUCTION



HERE are two plays within plays wherein Shakespeare commits extravagance: the "Hamlet" interlude and "The Taming of the Shrew." Needless to say, the inter-relation of the four plays is different; the inner play being a brief incident in the tragedy, and the outer play a mere incident in the comedy. But the inner play is in each case removed, set further than ordinary drama from the conditions of actual life, — the life of the audience seated at this table of double entertainment. Now, it seems evident that when he thus took two conventions, erected one proscenium within another, added fiction to fiction, lapped a play with a play, and proclaimed a second make-believe, Shakespeare took full advantage of this circumstance of art. He who knew the separa-

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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tion of drama from life knew the added separation of a drama within a drama from life, and gave himself a fantastic permission to exceed, and not only to exceed but to ignore, to *glisser*, to evade, to refuse us the right to look as deep as we may look into single, ordinary and primary drama. Into the comedy of "The Taming of the Shrew" we may not look, we look *upon* it. Nor do we, if we are wise, ask for leave to do more. "*N'appuyons pas.*" If we wish to pause, let it be on the slight play which is the first and the immediate drama, — that is, the "Induction," the comedy of Christopher Sly. Here is something to linger over, here are a very few things, but rich ones; here is something human, something richly alive, and responsible to Nature. Through one prosenium, through one convention, we look upon that life once removed from reality which is drama. The "Induction" is a very small play, but a play full of slightly scenic nature; "The Taming of the Shrew" itself is a long play, but a play vacant of nature. The Elizabethan dramatist took his ease in that inn of the stage, and took it the more whimsically in that stage-alcove, the inner scene whereon the Player King and the Player Queen, Petruchio and Katharine, act their parts. Fantastic, wilful, arbitrary, defiant, unchallengeable is "The Taming of the Shrew." Whatever pleasure we can take in this comedy is manifestly to be taken at a glance. To the Elizabethan audience the pleasure was not small; to us to-day it is not great. Such as it is, it must be taken with gaiety, without insistence, without exaction, and in haste. We must certainly not be either tender or stern;

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we must not incline to the pathos of mortal things. Not long ago an essayist found out pathos in Christopher Sly. Having looked close and sadly, and with a modern mind, to the tinker, he erected himself again, as it were, turned round, and told us it was this that he had discovered, — namely, pathos. It seems an undramatic quest and an importunate suggestion ; a lapse of tact, and under the guise of more than common imagination, an utter defect of phantasy, — this fond curiosity and this soft heart of the modern writer. Yet if he must be moved ; and if he must compel Shakespeare to serve him in his emotions ; and if he will not keep them for his living brothers, but must spend them on the comic drama, why then at least let him have his way with Christopher Sly and the “ Induction ” only ; let him stop there. Let him not intrude upon the inner play, and find the pathos of life in that gay interior where the light heart of drama takes sanctuary ; let him not attribute pathos to Katharine, or study Petruchio, or make a symbol of the Pedant.

Nevertheless, this, or nearly this, is what he has in fact done — or rather she ; for a woman, once well and honourably known for her Shakespearean studies, and in particular for a Concordance, did point the moral of Katharine and Bianca, making a story of the earlier girlhood of each, setting forth that once before had this shrew been tamed by a strong-handed boy, — Petruchio’s precursor ; that this generous nature of woman did but wait for love and a master ; and so forth. The thing is just worthy of mention because it may stand as a per-



## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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fect example of the kind of attention, the kind of sympathy, the seriousness, of which "The Taming of the Shrew" ought not to be the subject. Nay, it might be worth while to pretend to take such a commentary seriously for a while, in order to show the kind writer to what she would commit herself. Granting her, then, that the heroine of a tender story, a sentimental shrew honestly in need of love and a respectable master, is appropriately to be tamed by famine, cold, ignominy, insolence, and violence, to what end are these rigours practised in the play? To what end but to make of her a hypocrite—her husband the while happy to have her so? For a woman who feigns, under menace, to see a young maid where an old man stands, or a sun where the moon shines, is no other. Katharine does this for fear of the repetition of outrage—more famine, more cold, more contempt, at the hands of the strong man: the strong man of her girlish dreams, quotha! See to what a pass an earnest view of this play will bring us. But no need to confound the sentimentalist further with the monstrous morality—the merry drama. No, these sweet ways of feeling are out of place in the audience at the playing of "The Taming of the Shrew"; and as the audience, so must the readers be. The comedy is drama, and only by concomitance and only inasmuch as all composed language is literary, is it literature. And yet literature stands between it and life—nearer than life. Therefore neither to Katharine's past nor to her future have we to look, neither to her spirit nor to anything that can be called a woman's

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womanhood are we led by Shakespeare. She is not a woman of this world, she is a shrew of the inner stage. Let us look on her drama, not into it, and not through it. And in fact Shakespeare may have taken the convention of his comedy all the more easily because the Katharine played before him was not a woman. The squeaking Katharine who "boy'd her greatness" surely helped him to his irresponsibility. He had before him a romping youth, not a raging woman. In so far as this Katharine was a woman she was a grotesque and intolerable creature, to be overcome and broken by grotesque and intolerable means. This doubtless was the shrew of that society. She has vanished from ours. A shrew may scold, in our day, in the alleys of a town, but not in "Petruchio's house in the country"; not in the person of a beautiful, young, and well-taught woman. In Goldoni's comedies, of a century and a half later than Shakespeare's, there are still shrews. For a defect of dress, for a dowry, for a dispute with a mother-in-law, *rabbia* is the name of the lesser and earlier stages of a woman's anger, and *tutte le furie* of the greater and later. The men of those Venetian households, occupied with the choice of *paste* for the soup, and going in and out in the course of a long day on little affairs and bargainings, have for their principal preoccupation this tendency to *rabbia* and *tutte le furie* amongst the women—the ladies; let us give them the name that both Shakespeare and Goldoni give. It is to be noted that the Goldoni husband has no hope or expectation of a remedy; like Petruchio, he has no thought of appeal-

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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ing to the reason or the conscience of the woman; unlike Petruchio, he has no mind to quell her by force. Like Petruchio, again, he does her not so much honour as lies in a reproach; to responsible humanity belong reproof, rebuke, remonstrance, or even dislike, even forgiveness, but not to a woman married into a family of Venice. The husband in Goldoni's comedies neither hates nor pardons the furies — he does no more than evade them. If the noise will but spend itself and the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law return to their own apartments, pacified by promises, all is well for the time. The master-mind was never more tolerant or unmoved than in this master of a tempestuous household. He makes no comment, and generalises not at all. *Il ne fait que constater.* Sufficient for the day is the storm. After a reading of Goldoni, it might be worth while — for the love of Shakespeare, but hardly for the love of this play of his — to disentangle what is Italian from what is English. We have plenty of evidence of the currency of a popular play, “Taming of a Shrew,” in England in the time of Shakespeare. Other parts of Shakespeare's play are derived remotely from the Italian of Ariosto, and, moreover, the author of the comedy of which Petruchio is hero had a small piece of Italian knowledge of which the author of the tragedy that has Hamlet for hero was ignorant, — the gender, that is, of the Italian name Battista, or, as the English plays have it, Baptista. Its final vowel gave it a feminine sound, and it is a woman's name in “Hamlet,” but a man's, as it should be, in “The Taming of the Shrew.” This dis-

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parity has of course been remarked by those who have not thought the play last named to be the work of Shakespeare ; but the incident is too slight to bear any such significance. Obviously, Shakespeare might forget his scholarship on the point of Italian Christian names, if, as seems to be the case, we must not suppose that he corrected it, because "Hamlet" was the later work. Whatever may be the conflict of expert opinion as to the entire authorship, on the external ground, the testimony of the play itself is surely that, although Shakespeare the manager borrowed his plot, the scenes are the writing of Shakespeare the dramatist. "The Taming of the Shrew" is authentically Shakespeare's to the reader. Circumstantial evidence apart, the Shakespearean who is in every man and woman of letters, English and American, will not hesitate to pronounce it veritably Shakespeare's, almost Shakespeare's worst (the "Induction" apart), but as certainly his as "Lear" itself ; yet will be willing to accept any well-accredited origin for the dramatic story — Italian lendings, or popular current English horse-play, or any other. The note of the time is no more manifest than the tone of the man of the time. Shakespeare's tone, even when it is hardly significant enough to be called Shakespeare's style, is assuredly to be recognised like a voice. The note is Elizabethan ; and the dramatists, the lyrists, the sonneteers sing it alike ; but who would doubt the tone of the driest couplet in one of Shakespeare's sonnets ? Hardly more can one doubt whose voice in literature it is that speaks a slight speech for Bianca or for Tranio. Tranio, by the

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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way, is very Italian. That manner of man, who survived so buoyantly in the comedy of Molière, is evidently the Arlecchino, or Harlequin, of the primitive stage of Italy: the tricky and shifty spirit, the trusty rogue, the wonder-worker, the man in disguise, the Mercurial one. He is many times modified, and is exquisitely altered by the loss of his customary good luck, in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." For when Mercutio falls, there falls with him the gay but inhuman figure — falls, for English literature, perhaps finally. It lives, it takes a mortal wound at Tybalt's sword-point, it bleeds and dies. The primitive Italian tradition is, moreover, touched in another place, where Lucentio speaks to the smooth Bianca of her father, behind his back, as "the old Pantaloon." Baptista is very little of a Pantaleone; except inasmuch as he suffers deception, he is a person of sufficient dignity. And that he is subject to this deception is a token both of the Italian and of the Shakespearian humour. Of the two—the typical Italian primitive and the single Shakespeare—it may be suspected that it was Shakespeare who best loved a mystification; the word is not a good one in English, but we may quote it from the French to describe precisely the kind of jest. That Shakespeare took some Puckish pleasure in that jest we know. "The Comedy of Errors" bears witness to this, so does "Twelfth Night," so does "All's Well that Ends Well." Nay, a brief mystification comes to pass in the course of a tragedy; it hampers the urgency of some passage of passionate feeling; the moment, stretched with apprehension and dismay, is made to

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include a misunderstanding, such as that of Juliet and her nurse after the death of Tybalt. What Shakespeare manifestly loved was the error, but he loved it best in the form of mystification. The beguiling of Baptista by his daughter Bianca, the denying of Vincentio by his men, and the presentation of the Pedant in his place are perfect examples of that unjust pleasantry the sufferer whereof has no defence, for no wit nor wisdom nor wariness could avail him — he is entirely in the hands of a tormentor who has all the knowledge and all the advantage, and uses them for sport with delight, and without sparing, against the aged, the reverend, or the noble. It is true that the hero — son and lover — does not follow the jest to the utmost; that is left for Arlecchino, the merry rogue without a conscience. Whoever was Shakespeare's coadjutor — if he had one, and in some scenes in the part of Bianca it seems probable — Shakespeare in person took a sharp interest in this "coney-catching." To the greater number of modern spirits it is of so little interest, and so little to be loved, as to stand somewhat between them and their dramatist, — a difference involving the very substructure of humour. There is nothing for it but a reconciliation in the most humorous "Induction." And what is this but a mystification also? Although it is not perhaps the delusion of the tinker that so takes us, but his nature under all fortunes. We have Christopher Sly in common with Shakespeare, let his lord use him as he may. Careless Shakespeare, having carried his inner play to a jolly end, with a preposterous grave moral, sweeps the persons off their little sanctuary stage,

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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and forgets to close up the outer comedy at all ; so that we know no more of the tinker, nor of his restoration to the ale-house on the heath and to his quarrel with the ale-wife. Or the conclusion is lost. But, as it stands, the inner play carries off the victory, and the "Induction" is forgotten. The tinker ceases in the illusion of the lord's house. He ceases and vanishes, and the dramatist does not stay to have the laugh finally against him. No one waits to see Christopher Sly himself again, or to hear him attempt an indignant Marian Hacket with the recital of his adventure. So that the last we hear from him is the restless sigh offered by the clown to the fancy of drama and mirth : " Comes there any more of it ? . . . " 'T is a very excellent piece of work, madam lady ; would 't were done."

A scientific inquiry into the evidence touching the authorship of the play in all its parts is not within the province of this short essay. But it does belong to the appreciation of the comedy, and it is in the competence of a student of verse, to dwell for a moment upon the metrical testimony to the identity of the author of "Love's Labour's Lost" and the author of "The Taming of the Shrew." Anapæsts (I speak of course of anapæsts as one may adapt the word to the use of English prosody) are rare in English literature before the eighteenth century made them its lighter favourites, and peculiarly its own, the expression of its dapper and commonplace gaiety and frolic, whether in the age of Anne or when Mrs. Thrale was rendering epigrams from the French. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries meddled little

## INTRODUCTION

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with this kind of verse. The iambic movement, the noble gait of English poetry, rarely interrupted by a brief shifting to the springing foot of the trochee, is, in all its composure and simplicity, the very pace of these two great centuries. Lyrical poetry goes by in procession, from the stanza of Surrey to the ode of Dryden, to that measure. The dramatist in this matter keeps step and time with the lyrist; the numbers are different, the foot is the same. And Shakespeare's rhymes in the plays are, habitually, iambic — heroic couplets. In "Love's Labour's Lost," however, occurs, among the varied short iambic rhymed verses, the altered rhythm of a rough and imperfect anapæstic verse:—

"My lips are no common, though several they be."  
"Belonging to whom?" "To my fortunes and me."

And in "The Taming of the Shrew" is this, with — in various places — two or three more couplets like it:—

"'T was I won the wager, though you hit the white;  
And being the winner, God give you good night."

Nothing sounds stranger than such a movement in Shakespeare's verse, but the strangeness is common — with a quite evident identity of lax and careless rhythm — to the two plays.

After all, the value of this comedy is in the "Induction," and the value of the "Induction" is not only in its excellent humour, but in the external incidents — the direct allusion made here by Shakespeare to the daily landscape, the house, the householder of the Warwick-



## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

shire village known to him. Only in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and in the "Second Part of Henry IV" do we come thus near to the roads that Shakespeare walked, the heath he looked upon, the man and woman he watched brawling. "The Taming of the Shrew," if it be of earlier date than the two plays just named, has the first passages of this homely external intimacy, and Kit Sly brings us and the Past acquainted. We let the Shrew go by — the excuse for her story is that it passes ; but not so the Tinker.

ALICE MEYNELL.

# **THE TAMING OF THE SHREW**

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW INDUCTION

---

SLY. Third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I'll answer him by law : I'll not budge an inch, boy : let him come, and kindly. [*Falls asleep.*]

*Horns winded. Enter a Lord from hunting, with his train*

LORD. Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds :  
Brach Merriman, the poor cur is emboss'd ;

---

again in *Much Ado*, III, v, 15, in the abbreviated form "palabras." "Let the world slide" or "Let the world slip" (Induction, ii, 140, *infra*) is a common phrase for "take things easy." Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit without Money*, V, 2: "Will you go drink and let the world slide?" "Sessa!" reappears twice in *Lear*, III, iv, 99, and III, vi, 73; it seems a corruption of the Spanish "cessa," cease, give over, be quiet.

7 *Go by, Jeronimy*] The First Folio reads, *go by S. Ieronimie*. The ejaculation was a vulgar catchword drawn from the popular play by Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedie* . . . *With the pittiful death of old Hieronimo* (1594), III, xii, 31: "Hieronimo beware; go by, go by." The phrase constantly figures in Elizabethan drama, and implies impatience with anything disagreeable.

8 *go . . . warm thee*] Another vulgar ejaculation; it is repeated in *Lear*, III, iv, 47. The catch-phrase, which was very popular, was possibly suggested by another scene of Kyd's *Spanish Tragedie*, II, v, 1-12, where Hieronimo enters "in his shirt," and remarks, "What outcries pluck me from my naked bed And chill my throbbing heart with trembling fear?"

9 *thirdborough*] This is Theobald's emendation (rendered necessary by Sly's retort) of the Folio reading, *Headborough*. Both words mean "constable." "Thirdborough" appears as "Tharborough" in *L. L. L.*, I, i, 185.

12-13 *let . . . kindly*] let him come, and welcome.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

And couple Clowder with the deep-mouth'd brach.  
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good  
At the hedge-corner, in the coldest fault?  
I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.

FIRST HUN. Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord; 20  
He cried upon it at the merest loss,  
And twice to-day pick'd out the dullest scent:  
Trust me, I take him for the better dog.

LORD. Thou art a fool: if Echo were as fleet,  
I would esteem him worth a dozen such.  
But sup them well and look unto them all:  
To-morrow I intend to hunt again.

FIRST HUN. I will, my lord.

LORD. What's here? one dead, or drunk? See, doth  
he breathe?

SEC. HUN. He breathes, my lord. Were he not  
warm'd with ale, 30  
This were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly.

LORD. O monstrous beast! how like a swine he  
lies!  
Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image!  
Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man.  
What think you, if he were convey'd to bed,  
Wrapp'd in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers,  
A most delicious banquet by his bed,

---

18 *fault*] used here, much as in geology, for a breach in the continuity of the trail. "The cold *fault*" in *Venus and Adonis*, 694, is employed in the same way. "The coldest fault" is equivalent to "the dullest scent," l. 22, *infra*.

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW INDUCTION

---

And brave attendants near him when he wakes,  
Would not the beggar then forget himself?

FIRST HUN. Believe me, lord, I think he cannot  
choose. 40

SEC. HUN. It would seem strange unto him when he  
waked.

LORD. Even as a flattering dream or worthless fancy.  
Then take him up and manage well the jest :  
Carry him gently to my fairest chamber  
And hang it round with all my wanton pictures :  
Balm his foul head in warm distilled waters  
And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet :  
Procure me music ready when he wakes,  
To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound ;  
And if he chance to speak, be ready straight 50  
And with a low submissive reverence  
Say "What is it your honour will command?"  
Let one attend him with a silver basin  
Full of rose-water and bestrew'd with flowers ;  
Another bear the ewer, the third a diaper,  
And say "Will't please your lordship cool your  
hands?"

Some one be ready with a costly suit,  
And ask him what apparel he will wear ;  
Another tell him of his hounds and horse,  
And that his lady mourns at his disease : 60  
Persuade him that he hath been lunatic ;  
And when he says he is, say that he dreams,  
For he is nothing but a mighty lord.  
This do and do it kindly, gentle sirs :

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

It will be pastime passing excellent,  
If it be husbanded with modesty.

FIRST HUN. My lord, I warrant you we will play  
our part,  
As he shall think by our true diligence  
He is no less than what we say he is.

LORD. Take him up gently and to bed with him ; 70  
And each one to his office when he wakes.

[*Some bear out Sly. A trumpet sounds.*

Sirrah, go see what trumpet 't is that sounds :

[*Exit Servingman.*

Belike, some noble gentleman that means,  
Travelling some journey, to repose him here.

*Re-enter Servingman*

How now ! who is it ?

SERV. An 't please your honour, players  
That offer service to your lordship.

LORD. Bid them come near.

*Enter Players*

Now, fellows, you are welcome.

PLAYERS. We thank your honour.

LORD. Do you intend to stay with me to-night ?

---

66 *If . . . modesty*] If it be not overdone, if it be dealt with in moderation.

75-76 *players . . . lordship*] Strolling companies of Elizabethan actors were in the habit of calling at great lords' houses and offering to perform in their presence. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii.

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW INDUCTION

---

A PLAYER. So please your lordship to accept our duty.

80

LORD. With all my heart. This fellow I remember,  
Since once he play'd a farmer's eldest son :  
'T was where you woo'd the gentlewoman so well :  
I have forgot your name ; but, sure, that part  
Was aptly fitted and naturally perform'd.

A PLAYER. I think 't was Soto that your honour means.

LORD. 'T is very true : thou didst it excellent.  
Well, you are come to me in happy time ;  
The rather for I have some sport in hand  
Wherein your cunning can assist me much.  
There is a lord will hear you play to-night :  
But I am doubtful of your modesties ;  
Lest over-eyeing of his odd behaviour, —  
For yet his honour never heard a play, —  
You break into some merry passion  
And so offend him ; for I tell you, sirs,  
If you should smile he grows impatient.

90

---

86 *A Player*] In the First Folio, and also in the old play of *A Shrew*, for "A Player" is substituted "Sincklo," the name of a well-known actor of the day, who is also introduced into the old editions of *2 Hen. IV*, V, iv, and *3 Hen. VI*, III, i, as well as into the Induction of Marston's *Malcontent*. "Soto" is doubtless a character in some unidentified Spanish or Italian play. The earliest English piece in which it is found is Beaumont and Fletcher's *Women Pleased* (1620 ?).

95 *merry passion*] burst of merriment. Cf. "The over-merry spleen," l. 135, *infra*.

SCENE I    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

A PLAYER. Fear not, my lord : we can contain ourselves,

Were he the veriest antic in the world.

LORD. Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery, 100  
And give them friendly welcome every one :  
Let them want nothing that my house affords.

*[Exit one with the Players.]*

Sirrah, go you to Barthol'mew my page,  
And see him dress'd in all suits like a lady :  
That done, conduct him to the drunkard's chamber ;  
And call him "madam," do him obeisance.  
Tell him from me, as he will win my love,  
He bear himself with honourable action,  
Such as he hath observed in noble ladies  
Unto their lords, by them accomplished : 110  
Such duty to the drunkard let him do  
With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,  
And say, "What is 't your honour will command,  
Wherein your lady and your humble wife  
May show her duty and make known her love ?"  
And then with kind embracements, tempting kisses,  
And with declining head into his bosom,  
Bid him shed tears, as being overjoy'd  
To see her noble lord restored to health,  
Who for this seven years hath esteemed him 120  
No better than a poor and loathsome beggar :  
And if the boy have not a woman's gift  
To rain a shower of commanded tears,  
An onion will do well for such a shift,  
Which in a napkin being close convey'd



## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW INDUCTION

---

Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.  
See this dispatch'd with all the haste thou canst :  
Anon I'll give thee more instructions. [*Exit a Servingman.*  
I know the boy will well usurp the grace,  
Voice, gait and action of a gentlewoman : 130  
I long to hear him call the drunkard husband,  
And how my men will stay themselves from laughter  
When they do homage to this simple peasant.  
I'll in to counsel them ; haply my presence  
May well abate the over-merry spleen  
Which otherwise would grow into extremes. [*Exeunt.*

### SCENE II — A BEDCHAMBER IN THE LORD'S HOUSE

*Enter aloft SLY, with Attendants ; some with apparel, others with basin and ewer and other appurtenances, and Lord*

SLY. For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

FIRST SERV. Will't please your lordship drink a cup of sack ?

SEC. SERV. Will't please your honour taste of these conserves ?

THIRD SERV. What raiment will your honour wear to-day ?

\* SLY. I am Christophero Sly ; call not me "honour" nor "lordship : " I ne'er drank sack in my life ; and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef : ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear ; for I have no

---

135 over-merry spleen] Cf. note on l. 95, *supra*.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet ; nay, sometime more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the 10 overleather.

LORD. Heaven cease this idle humour in your honour !  
O, that a mighty man of such descent,  
Of such possessions and so high esteem,  
Should be infused with so foul a spirit !

SLY. What, would you make me mad ? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker ? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know 20 me not : if she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom. What ! I am not bestraught : here's —

THIRD SERV. O, this it is that makes your lady mourn !

SEC. SERV. O, this is it that makes your servants droop !

---

17 *Burton-heath*] The village of Barton-on-the-heath, the home of Shakespeare's aunt, the wife of Edmund Lambert.

20 *Marian Hacket . . . Wincot*] Wincot, a small hamlet within four miles of Stratford-on-Avon, is in the parish of Quinton. There a family of Hackets is noticed in the parish registers. The Warwickshire poet, Sir Aston Cokain, identified Wincot, as noticed by Sly, with Wilnecote (pronounced Wincot), a village in North Warwickshire. Others identify it with Wilmcote, the native place of Shakespeare's mother, which is also popularly pronounced Wincot. But Shakespeare's reference is doubtless to Wincot in Quinton parish.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW INDUCTION

---

LORD. Hence comes it that your kindred shuns your  
house,  
As beaten hence by your strange lunacy.  
O noble lord, bethink thee of thy birth,  
Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment,  
And banish hence these abject lowly dreams. 30  
Look how thy servants do attend on thee,  
Each in his office ready at thy beck.  
Wilt thou have music? hark! Apollo plays, [Music.  
And twenty caged nightingales do sing:  
Or wilt thou sleep? we'll have thee to a couch  
Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed  
On purpose trimm'd up for Semiramis.  
Say thou wilt walk; we will bestrew the ground:  
Or wilt thou ride? thy horses shall be trapp'd,  
Their harness studded all with gold and pearl. 40  
Dost thou love hawking? thou hast hawks will  
soar  
Above the morning lark: or wilt thou hunt?  
Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them,  
And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth.  
FIRST SERV. Say thou wilt course; thy greyhounds  
are as swift  
As breathed stags, ay, fleeter than the roe.  
SEC. SERV. Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch  
thee straight  
Adonis painted by a running brook,  
And Cytherea all in sedges hid,  
Which seem to move and wanton with her breath, 50  
Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

LORD. We'll show thee Io as she was a maid  
And how she was beguiled and surprised,  
As lively painted as the deed was done.

THIRD SERV. Or Daphne roaming through a thorny  
wood,  
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,  
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,  
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

LORD. Thou art a lord and nothing but a lord :  
Thou hast a lady far more beautiful 60  
Than any woman in this waning age.

FIRST SERV. And till the tears that she hath shed  
for thee  
Like envious floods o'er-run her lovely face,  
She was the fairest creature in the world ;  
And yet she is inferior to none.

SLY. Am I a lord ? and have I such a lady ?  
Or do I dream ? or have I dream'd till now ?  
I do not sleep : I see, I hear, I speak ;  
I smell sweet savours and I feel soft things :  
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed, 70  
And not a tinker nor Christophero Sly.  
Well, bring our lady hither to our sight ;  
And once again, a pot o' the smallest ale.

SEC. SERV. Will't please your mightiness to wash  
your hands ?  
O, how we joy to see your wit restored !  
O, that once more you knew but what you are !  
These fifteen years you have been in a dream ;  
Or when you waked, so waked as if you slept.

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    INDUCTION

---

SLY. These fifteen years ! by my fay, a goodly nap.  
But did I never speak of all that time ? 80

FIRST SERV. O, yes, my lord, but very idle words :  
For though you lay here in this goodly chamber,  
Yet would you say ye were beaten out of door ;  
And rail upon the hostess of the house ;  
And say you would present her at the leet,  
Because she brought stone jugs, and no seal'd quarts :  
Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.

SLY. Ay, the woman's maid of the house.

THIRD SERV. Why, sir, you know no house nor no  
                                such maid,  
Nor no such men as you have reckon'd up, 90  
As Stephen Sly and old John Naps of Greece  
And Peter Turph and Henry Pimpernell  
And twenty more such names and men as these  
Which never were nor no man ever saw.

SLY. Now Lord be thanked for my good amends !

ALL. Amen.

SLY. I thank thee : thou shalt not lose by it.

*Enter the Page as a lady, attended*

PAGE. How fares my noble lord ?

SLY. Marry, I fare well ; for here is cheer enough.  
Where is my wife ? 100

PAGE. Here, noble lord : what is thy will with her ?

SLY. Are you my wife and will not call me husband ?  
My men should call me "lord" : I am your good-man.

86 *seal'd quarts*] quart pots certified by an official stamp.

91 *Greece*] Doubtless a misreading of Greet, a hamlet in Gloucestershire, not far from Stratford-on-Avon.

SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

PAGE. My husband and my lord, my lord and  
husband ;

I am your wife in all obedience.

SLY. I know it well. What must I call her ?

LORD. Madam.

SLY. Al'ce madam, or Joan madam ?

LORD. " Madam " and nothing else : so lords call  
ladies.

SLY. Madam wife, they say that I have dream'd 110  
And slept above some fifteen year or more.

PAGE. Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,  
Being all this time abandon'd from your bed.

SLY. 'T is much. Servants, leave me and her alone.  
Madam, undress you and come now to bed.

PAGE. Thrice-noble lord, let me entreat of you  
To pardon me yet for a night or two ;

Or, if not so, until the sun be set :

For your physicians have expressly charged,

In peril to incur your former malady, 120

That I should yet absent me from your bed :

I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

SLY. Ay, it stands so that I may hardly tarry so  
long. But I would be loath to fall into my dreams  
again : I will therefore tarry in despite of the flesh and  
the blood.

*Enter a Messenger*

MESS. Your honour's players, hearing your amend-  
ment,

Are come to play a pleasant comedy ;

For so your doctors hold it very meet,  
 Seeing too much sadness hath congeal'd your blood,  
 And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy : 130  
 Therefore they thought it good you hear a play  
 And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,  
 Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

SLY. Marry, I will, let them play it. Is not a comonty  
 a Christmas gambold or a tumbling-trick ?

PAGE. No, my good lord ; it is more pleasing stuff.

SLY. What, household stuff ?

PAGE. It is a kind of history.

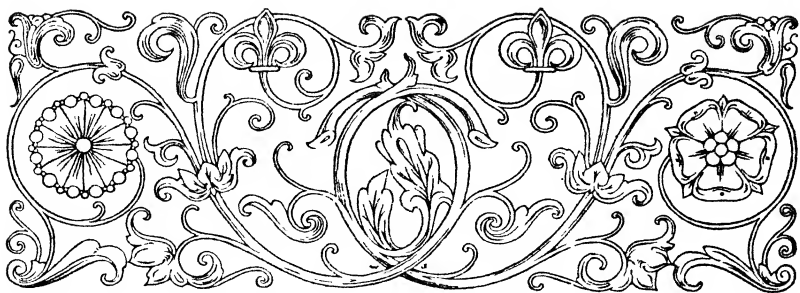
SLY. Well, we'll see 't. Come, madam wife, sit by my  
 side and let the world slip : we shall ne'er be younger. 140

*Flourish*

---

134 *comonty*] comedy. In the old play there figures a similar blunder  
 "comoditie" (for "comedy").

140 *let the world slip*] Cf. note on Induction, i, 5, *supra*.

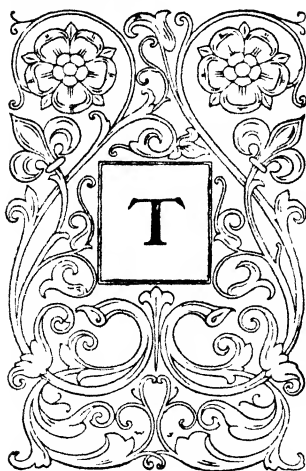


# ACT FIRST — SCENE I — PADUA

## A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter LUCENTIO and his man TRANIO*

LUCENTIO



TRANIO, SINCE FOR THE  
great desire I had  
To see fair Padua, nursery of  
arts,  
I am arrived for fruitful Lom-  
bardy,  
The pleasant garden of great  
Italy ;  
And by my father's love and  
leave am arm'd  
With his good will and thy  
good company,  
My trusty servant, well approved  
in all,

Here let us breathe and haply institute  
A course of learning and ingenious studies.  
Pisa renowned for grave citizens

10

10 *Pisa . . . citizens*] The line is repeated, IV, ii, 95, *infra*.



Gave me my being and my father first,  
 A merchant of great traffic through the world,  
 Vincentio, come of the Bentivolii.  
 Vincentio's son brought up in Florence  
 It shall become to serve all hopes conceived,  
 To deck his fortune with his virtuous deeds :  
 And therefore, Tranio, for the time I study,  
 Virtue and that part of philosophy  
 Will I apply that treats of happiness  
 By virtue specially to be achieved.  
 Tell me thy mind ; for I have Pisa left  
 And am to Padua come, as he that leaves  
 A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep,  
 And with satiety seeks to quench his thirst.

20

TRA. *Mi perdonato*, gentle master mine,  
 I am in all affected as yourself ;  
 Glad that you thus continue your resolve  
 To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.  
 Only, good master, while we do admire  
 This virtue and this moral discipline,  
 Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray ;  
 Or so devote to Aristotle's checks  
 As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured :  
 Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,  
 And practise rhetoric in your common talk ;

30

---

32 *checks*] rebukes, reproofs. This is the original reading, which modern editors needlessly change to *ethics*.

34 *Balk*] The word literally means "separate," or "discriminate." Hence "balk logic" is equivalent to "argue or wrangle" after the manner of logicians.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

Music and poesy use to quicken you ;  
The mathematics and the metaphysics,  
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you ;  
No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en :  
In brief, sir, study what you most affect. 40

LUC. Gramercies, Tranio, well dost thou advise.  
If, Biondello, thou wert come ashore,  
We could at once put us in readiness,  
And take a lodging fit to entertain  
Such friends as time in Padua shall beget.  
But stay a while : what company is this ?

TRA. Master, some show to welcome us to town.

*Enter BAPTISTA, KATHARINA, BIANCA, GREMIO, and HORTENSIO.*  
*LUCENTIO and TRANIO stand by*

BAP. Gentlemen, importune me no farther,  
For how I firmly am resolved you know ;  
That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter 50  
Before I have a husband for the elder :  
If either of you both love Katharina,  
Because I know you well and love you well,  
Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.

GRE. [*Aside*] To cart her rather : she's too rough for me.  
There, there, Hortensio, will you any wife ?

KATH. I pray you, sir, is it your will  
To make a stale of me amongst these mates ?

---

47 *Gremio*] In a stage-direction of the Folios this character is here suggestively described as "Gremio a Pantelowne." Cf. III, i, 36, *infra*.  
58 *stale*] commonly interpreted as "butt" or "laughing-stock." But

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT I

HOR. Mates, maid ! how mean you that ? no mates  
for you,

Unless you were of gentler, milder mould. 60

KATH. I' faith, sir, you shall never need to fear :

I wis it is not half way to her heart ;

But if it were, doubt not her care should be

To comb your noddle with a three-legg'd stool

And paint your face and use you like a fool.

HOR. From all such devils, good Lord deliver us !

GRE. And me too, good Lord !

TRA. Husht, master ! here's some good pastime  
toward :

That wench is stark mad or wonderful froward.

LUC. But in the other's silence do I see 70

Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety.

Peace, Tranio !

TRA. Well said, master ; mum ! and gaze your fill.

BAP. Gentlemen, that I may soon make good

What I have said, Bianca, get you in :

And let it not displease thee, good Bianca,

For I will love thee ne'er the less, my girl.

KATH. A pretty peat ! it is best

Put finger in the eye, an she knew why.

BIAN. Sister, content you in my discontent. 80

Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe :

My books and instruments shall be my company,

On them to look and practise by myself.

---

it is sometimes used in the sense of "common harlot." A quibble  
on "stalemate" (in chess) is suggested.

78 *peat*] archaic form of "pet," "darling."

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

LUC. Hark, Tranio! thou may'st hear Minerva speak.

HOR. Signior Baptista, will you be so strange?  
Sorry am I that our good will effects  
Bianca's grief.

GRE. Why will you mew her up,  
Signior Baptista, for this fiend of hell,  
And make her bear the penance of her tongue?

BAP. Gentlemen, content ye; I am resolved: 90  
Go in, Bianca: [Exit Bianca.

And for I know she taketh most delight  
In music, instruments and poetry,  
Schoolmasters will I keep within my house,  
Fit to instruct her youth. If you, Hortensio,  
Or Signior Gremio, you, know any such,  
Prefer them hither; for to cunning men  
I will be very kind, and liberal  
To mine own children in good bringing-up.

And so farewell. Katharina, you may stay; 100  
For I have more to commune with Bianca. [Exit.

KATH. Why, and I trust I may go too, may I not?  
What, shall I be appointed hours; as though, belike,  
I knew not what to take, and what to leave, ha? [Exit.

GRE. You may go to the devil's dam: your gifts are  
so good, here's none will hold you. Their love is not so

---

85 *will . . . strange*] will you act so strangely, follow so strange a  
course?

106 *Their love*] The good will of Baptista and Bianca (towards  
us). The substitution of *Our* for the old reading *Their* seems  
unnecessary.

great, Hortensio, but we may blow our nails together, and fast it fairly out: our cake's dough on both sides. Farewell: yet, for the love I bear my sweet Bianca, if I can by any means light on a fit man to teach her that wherein she delights, I will wish him to her father.

111

HOR. So will I, Signior Gremio: but a word, I pray. Though the nature of our quarrel yet never brooked parle, know now, upon advice, it toucheth us both, that we may yet again have access to our fair mistress, and be happy rivals in Bianca's love, to labour and effect one thing specially.

GRE. What's that, I pray?

HOR. Marry, sir, to get a husband for her sister.

GRE. A husband! a devil.

HOR. I say, a husband.

120

GRE. I say, a devil. Thinkest thou, Hortensio, though her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell?

HOR. Tush, Gremio, though it pass your patience and mine to endure her loud alarums, why, man, there be good fellows in the world, an a man could light on them, would take her with all her faults, and money enough.

127

GRE. I cannot tell; but I had as lief take her dowry

---

107 *we may blow our nails together*] we may twiddle our thumbs; we are out of it.

108 *our cake's dough*] a common proverbial phrase meaning "it is all up with us." The phrase is repeated, V, i, 125, *infra*.

111 *wish*] recommend. The word is twice used in the same sense, *infra*, I, ii, 58, 62.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

with this condition, to be whipped at the high-cross every morning.

HOR. Faith, as you say, there's small choice in rotten apples. But come; since this bar in law makes us friends, it shall be so far forth friendly maintained till by helping Baptista's eldest daughter to a husband we set his youngest free for a husband, and then have to't afresh. Sweet Bianca! Happy man be his dole! He that runs fastest gets the ring. How say you, Signior Gremio?

GRE. I am agreed; and would I had given him the best horse in Padua to begin his wooing that would thoroughly woo her, wed her and bed her and rid the house of her! Come on. [*Exeunt Gremio and Hortensio.* 140

TRA. I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible  
That love should of a sudden take such hold?

LUC. O Tranio, till I found it to be true,  
I never thought it possible or likely;  
But see, while idly I stood looking on,  
I found the effect of love in idleness:  
And now in plainness do confess to thee,  
That art to me as secret and as dear  
As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was,  
Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio, 150  
If I achieve not this young modest girl.

---

129 *high-cross*] the cross usually found set up in the market place of a town.

135 *Happy man be his dole*] A common proverbial greeting equivalent to "good luck be with him." "Dole" means "lot" or "share."

136 *the ring*] the prize in a running match; a proverbial phrase.

Counsel me, Tranio, for I know thou canst ;  
Assist me, Tranio, for I know thou wilt.

TRA. Master, it is no time to chide you now ;  
Affection is not rated from the heart :  
If love have touch'd you, nought remains but so,  
"Redime te captum quam queas minimo."

LUC. Gramercies, lad, go forward ; this contents :  
The rest will comfort, for thy counsel's sound.

TRA. Master, you look'd so longly on the maid, 160  
Perhaps you mark'd not what's the pith of all.

LUC. O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face,  
Such as the daughter of Agenor had,  
That made great Jove to humble him to her hand,  
When with his knees he kiss'd the Cretan strond.

TRA. Saw you no more ? mark'd you not how her sister  
Began to scold and raise up such a storm  
That mortal ears might hardly endure the din ?

LUC. Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move  
And with her breath she did perfume the air : 170  
Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

TRA. Nay, then, 't is time to stir him from his trance.  
I pray, awake, sir : if you love the maid,  
Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. Thus it stands :  
Her elder sister is so curst and shrewd

155 *rated*] scolded, driven out by chiding.

157 "*Redime . . . minimo*" ] "Yield thyself captive with the least possible resistance" ; a misquotation, from Lily's grammar, of a line in Terence, *Eunuch.*, I, i, 29, 30 : "Quid agas, nisi ut te *redimas captum quam queas minimo*."

163 *daughter of Agenor*] Europa.

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

That till the father rid his hands of her,  
Master, your love must live a maid at home ;  
And therefore has he closely mew'd her up,  
Because she will not be annoy'd with suitors.

LUC. Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father's he ! 180  
But art thou not advised, he took some care  
To get her cunning schoolmasters to instruct her ?

TRA. Ay, marry, am I, sir ; and now 't is plotted.

LUC. I have it, Tranio.

TRA. Master, for my hand,  
Both our inventions meet and jump in one.

LUC. Tell me thine first.

TRA. You will be schoolmaster  
And undertake the teaching of the maid :  
That's your device.

LUC. It is : may it be done ?

TRA. Not possible ; for who shall bear your part,  
And be in Padua here Vincentio's son ; 190  
Keep house and ply his book, welcome his friends,  
Visit his countrymen and banquet them ?

LUC. Basta ; content thee, for I have it full.  
We have not yet been seen in any house,  
Nor can we be distinguish'd by our faces  
For man or master ; then it follows thus ;  
Thou shalt be master, Tranio, in my stead,  
Keep house and port and servants, as I should :  
I will some other be ; some Florentine,  
Some Neapolitan, or meaner man of Pisa. 200

---

193 *Basta*] " Enough ;" the word is both Spanish and Italian.

198 *port*] magnificence or pomp.



'T is hatch'd and shall be so : Tranio, at once  
Uncase thee ; take my colour'd hat and cloak :  
When Biondello comes, he waits on thee ;  
But I will charm him first to keep his tongue.

TRA. So had you need.

In brief, sir, sith it your pleasure is,  
And I am tied to be obedient,  
For so your father charged me at our parting ;  
“ Be serviceable to my son,” quoth he,  
Although I think 't was in another sense ;  
I am content to be Lucentio,  
Because so well I love Lucentio.

210

LUC. Tranio, be so, because Lucentio loves :  
And let me be a slave, to achieve that maid  
Whose sudden sight hath thrall'd my wounded eye.  
Here comes the rogue.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

Sirrah, where have you been ?

BION. Where have I been ! Nay, how now ! where  
are you ? Master, has my fellow Tranio stolen your  
clothes ? Or you stolen his ? or both ? pray, what 's the  
news ?

LUC. Sirrah, come hither : 't is no time to jest,  
And therefore frame your manners to the time.  
Your fellow Tranio here, to save my life,  
Puts my apparel and my countenance on,  
And I for my escape have put on his ;  
For in a quarrel since I came ashore

220

SCENE I    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

I kill'd a man and fear I was descried :  
Wait you on him, I charge you, as becomes,  
While I make way from hence to save my life :  
You understand me ?

BION.                    I, sir ! ne'er a whit.

LUC. And not a jot of Tranio in your mouth :                    230  
Tranio is changed into Lucentio.

BION. The better for him : would I were so too !

TRA. So could I, faith, boy, to have the next wish  
after,

That Lucentio indeed had Baptista's youngest daughter.  
But, sirrah, not for my sake, but your master's, I advise  
You use your manners discreetly in all kind of com-  
panies :

When I am alone, why, then I am Tranio ;  
But in all places else your master Lucentio.                    238

LUC. Tranio, let 's go : one thing more rests, that thy-  
self execute, to make one among these wooers : if thou  
ask me why, sufficeth, my reasons are both good and  
weighty.                    *[Exeunt.]*

*The presenters above speak*

FIRST SERV. My lord, you nod ; you do not mind the  
play.

SLY. Yes, by Saint Anne, do I. A good matter,  
surely : comes there any more of it ?

PAGE. My lord, 't is but begun.

SLY. 'T is a very excellent piece of work, madam  
lady : would 't were done !                    *[They sit and mark.]*

SCENE II — PADUA

BEFORE HORTENSIO'S HOUSE

*Enter PETRUCHIO and his man GRUMIO*

PET. Verona, for a while I take my leave,  
To see my friends in Padua, but of all  
My best beloved and approved friend,  
Hortensio ; and I trow this is his house.  
Here, sirrah Grumio ; knock, I say.

GRU. Knock, sir ! whom should I knock ? is there  
any man has rebused your worship ?

PET. Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.

GRU. Knock you here, sir ! why, sir, what am I, sir,  
that I should knock you here, sir ? 10

PET. Villain, I say, knock me at this gate  
And rap me well, or I 'll knock your knave's pate.

GRU. My master is grown quarrelsome. I should  
knock you first,  
And then I know after who comes by the worst.

PET. Will it not be ?  
Faith, sirrah, an you 'll not knock, I 'll ring it ;  
I 'll try how you can *sol, fa*, and sing it.

*[He wrings him by the ears.]*

GRU. Help, masters, help ! my master is mad.

PET. Now, knock when I bid you, sirrah villain !

---

8 *knock me here*] knock for me here ; "me" is a redundant dative,  
which was common in Elizabethan English.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

*Enter HORTENSIO*

HOR. How now! what's the matter? My old friend 20  
Grumio! and my good friend Petruchio! How do you  
all at Verona?

PET. Signior Hortensio, come you to part the fray?  
"Con tutto il core ben trovato," may I say.

HOR. "Alla nostra casa ben venuto, molto honorato  
signor mio Petrucio."

Rise, Grumio, rise: we will compound this quarrel.

GRU. Nay, 't is no matter, sir, what he 'leges in Latin.  
If this be not a lawful cause for me to leave his service,  
look you, sir, he bid me knock him and rap him soundly, 30  
sir: well, was it fit for a servant to use his master so, be-  
ing perhaps, for aught I see, two-and-thirty, a pip out?  
Whom would to God I had well knock'd at first,  
Then had not Grumio come by the worst.

PET. A senseless villain! Good Hortensio,  
I bade the rascal knock upon your gate  
And could not get him for my heart to do it.

GRU. Knock at the gate! O heavens! Spake you  
not these words plain, "Sirrah, knock me here, rap me  
here, knock me well, and knock me soundly"? And 40  
come you now with, "knocking at the gate"?

PET. Sirrah, be gone, or talk not, I advise you.

HOR. Petruchio, patience; I am Grumio's pledge:

---

32 *two-and-thirty, a pip out*] Pip is a spot on playing cards. The allusion is to an old card game, called "bone ace," or "one and thirty;" see IV, ii, 57, *infra*. Cf. Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*, II, ii: "[You] are *thirty-two* years old, which is a *pip out*."

Why, this 's a heavy chance 'twixt him and you,  
Your ancient, trusty, pleasant servant Grumio.  
And tell me now, sweet friend, what happy gale  
Blows you to Padua here from old Verona ?

PET. Such wind as scatters young men through the  
world,

To seek their fortunes farther than at home,  
Where small experience grows. But in a few, 50  
Signior Hortensio, thus it stands with me :  
Antonio, my father, is deceased ;  
And I have thrust myself into this maze,  
Haply to wive and thrive as best I may :  
Crowns in my purse I have and goods at home,  
And so am come abroad to see the world.

HOR. Petruchio, shall I then come roundly to thee,  
And wish thee to a shrewd ill-favour'd wife ?  
Thou 'ldst thank me but a little for my counsel :  
And yet I 'll promise thee she shall be rich, 60  
And very rich : but thou 'rt too much my friend,  
And I 'll not wish thee to her.

PET. Signior Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we  
Few words suffice ; and therefore, if thou know  
One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,  
As wealth is burden of my wooing dance,  
Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,

57 *come roundly* ] speak bluntly or outspokenly. Cf. *infra*, III, ii, 210,  
"take it on you so roundly," and IV, iv, 102, "I 'll roundly go about  
her."

67 *Florentius' love*] Gower in his *Confessio Amantis* tells the old story  
of the knight Florent or Florentius, who swore to marry a

As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd  
As Socrates' Xanthippe, or a worse,  
She moves me not, or not removes, at least,  
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough  
As are the swelling Adriatic seas :  
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua ;  
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

70

GRU. Nay, look you, sir, he tells you flatly what his mind is : why, give him gold enough and marry him to a puppet or an aglet-baby ; or an old trot with ne'er a tooth in her head, though she have as many diseases as two and fifty horses : why, nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal.

80

HOR. Petruchio, since we are stepp'd thus far in,  
I will continue that I broach'd in jest.  
I can, Petruchio, help thee to a wife  
With wealth enough and young and beauteous,  
Brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman :  
Her only fault, and that is faults enough,  
Is that she is intolerable curst  
And shrewd and froward, so beyond all measure,

---

hideous hag in consideration of her giving him the answer to a riddle, which he was pledged either to solve or to die. The "Wife of Bath" tells the same story, though the knight is given no name, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

68 *As old as Sibyl*] Cf. "As old as Sibylla," *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii, 119, note.

79 *two and fifty horses*] The "fifty diseases of a horse" were proverbial. Cf. *Yorkshire Tragedy* : "The fifty diseases stop thee." The numeral in "two and fifty horses" strikes a characteristic note of exaggeration.

That, were my state far worser than it is,  
I would not wed her for a mine of gold. 90

PET. Hortensio, peace ! thou know'st not gold's effect :  
Tell me her father's name and 't is enough ;  
For I will board her, though she chide as loud  
As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack.

HOR. Her father is Baptista Minola,  
An affable and courteous gentleman :  
Her name is Katharina Minola,  
Renown'd in Padua for her scolding tongue.

PET. I know her father, though I know not her ;  
And he knew my deceased father well. 100  
I will not sleep, Hortensio, till I see her ;  
And therefore let me be thus bold with you  
To give you over at this first encounter,  
Unless you will accompany me thither.

GRU. I pray you, sir, let him go while the humour  
lasts. O' my word, an she knew him as well as I do,  
she would think scolding would do little good upon him :  
she may perhaps call him half a score knaves or so : why,  
that's nothing ; an he begin once, he'll rail in his rope-  
tricks. I'll tell you what, sir, an she stand him but a  
little, he will throw a figure in her face and so disfigure

102-103 *let me . . . encounter*] let me be so frank as to tell you that I  
shall abandon you at our first meeting.

109-110 *rope-tricks*] Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 141-142 : "What saucy  
merchant was this that was so full of his *ropery*," i. e. "roguery."  
But the use of "figure (of speech)" in the next sentence suggests  
that Grumio is mispronouncing "rhetoric" when he employs the  
word "rope-tricks."

111 *figure*] a figure of speech. Perhaps there is a quibbling reference  
[ 32 ]

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

her with it that she shall have no more eyes to see  
withal than a cat. You know him not, sir. 113

HOR. Tarry, Petruchio, I must go with thee ;  
For in Baptista's keep my treasure is :  
He hath the jewel of my life in hold,  
His youngest daughter, beautiful Bianca ;  
And her withholds from me and other more,  
Suitors to her and rivals in my love ;  
Supposing it a thing impossible, 120  
For those defects I have before rehearsed,  
That ever Katharina will be woo'd ;  
Therefore this order hath Baptista ta'en,  
That none shall have access unto Bianca  
Till Katharine the curst have got a husband.

GRU. Katharine the curst !  
A title for a maid of all titles the worst.

HOR. Now shall my friend Petruchio do me grace ;  
And offer me disguised in sober robes  
To old Baptista as a schoolmaster 130  
Well seen in music, to instruct Bianca ;  
That so I may, by this device, at least  
Have leave and leisure to make love to her,  
And unsuspected court her by herself.

GRU. Here's no knavery ! See, to beguile the old  
folks, how the young folks lay their heads together !

---

to the common phrase about "setting the ten commandments  
in your face," which meant using the ten fingers or the fists for  
purposes of assault.

113 *a cat*] The cat was commonly reputed to be purblind or blear-eyed  
by day, though well able to see in the dark.



# THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    ACT I

---

*Enter GREMIO, and LUCENTIO disguised*

Master, master, look about you : who goes there, ha ?

HOR. Peace, Grumio ! it is the rival of my love.

Petruchio, stand by a while.

GRU. A proper stripling and an amorous ! 140

GRE. O, very well ; I have perused the note.

Hark you, sir ; I'll have them very fairly bound :

All books of love, see that at any hand ;

And see you read no other lectures to her :

You understand me : over and beside

Signior Baptista's liberality,

I'll mend it with a largess. Take your paper too,

And let me have them very well perfumed :

For she is sweeter than perfume itself

To whom they go to. What will you read to her ? 150

LUC. Whate'er I read to her, I'll plead for you

As for my patron, stand you so assured,

As firmly as yourself were still in place :

Yea, and perhaps with more successful words

Than you, unless you were a scholar, sir.

GRE. O this learning, what a thing it is !

GRU. O this woodcock, what an ass it is !

PET. Peace, sirrah !

HOR. Grumio, mum ! God save you, Signior Gremio.

---

147 *Take your paper too*] *Paper* is the old reading, for which Pope and most succeeding editors substitute *papers*. The reference seems to be to the "note" or list of books, mentioned in line 141. "Them," in line 148, doubtless refers to the books themselves.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

GRE. And you are well met, Signior Hortensio. 160  
Trow you whither I am going? To Baptista Minola.

I promised to inquire carefully  
About a schoolmaster for the fair Bianca:  
And by good fortune I have lighted well  
On this young man, for learning and behaviour  
Fit for her turn, well read in poetry  
And other books, good ones, I warrant ye.

HOR. 'Tis well; and I have met a gentleman  
Hath promised me to help me to another,  
A fine musician to instruct our mistress; 170  
So shall I no whit be behind in duty  
To fair Bianca, so beloved of me.

GRE. Beloved of me; and that my deeds shall prove.

GRU. And that his bags shall prove.

HOR. Gremio, 'tis now no time to vent our love:  
Listen to me, and if you speak me fair,  
I'll tell you news indifferent good for either.  
Here is a gentleman whom by chance I met,  
Upon agreement from us to his liking,  
Will undertake to woo curst Katharine, 180  
Yea, and to marry her, if her dowry please.

GRE. So said, so done, is well.  
Hortensio, have you told him all her faults?

PET. I know she is an irksome brawling scold:  
If that be all, masters, I hear no harm.

GRE. No, say'st me so, friend? What countryman?

PET. Born in Verona, old Antonio's son:  
My father dead, my fortune lives for me;  
And I do hope good days and long to see.



SCENE II    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

*Enter TRANIO brave, and BIONDELLO*

TRA. Gentlemen, God save you. If I may be bold,  
Tell me, I beseech you, which is the readiest way  
To the house of Signior Baptista Minola?

BION. He that has the two fair daughters: is't he  
you mean?

TRA. Even he, Biondello. 220

GRE. Hark you, sir; you mean not her to —

TRA. Perhaps, him and her, sir: what have you to do?

PET. Not her that chides, sir, at any hand, I pray.

TRA. I love no chiders, sir. Biondello, let's away.

LUC. Well begun, Tranio.

HOR. Sir, a word ere you go;  
Are you a suitor to the maid you talk of, yea or no?

TRA. And if I be, sir, is it any offence?

GRE. No; if without more words you will get you  
hence.

TRA. Why, sir, I pray, are not the streets as free  
For me as for you?

GRE. But so is not she. 230

TRA. For what reason, I beseech you?

GRE. For this reason, if you'll know,  
That she's the choice love of Signior Gremio.

HOR. That she's the chosen of Signior Hortensio.

TRA. Softly, my masters! if you be gentlemen,  
Do me this right; hear me with patience.

Baptista is a noble gentleman,

To whom my father is not all unknown;

And were his daughter fairer than she is,

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT I

She may more suitors have and me for one.  
Fair Leda's daughter had a thousand wooers ;  
Then well one more may fair Bianca have :  
And so she shall ; Lucentio shall make one,  
Though Paris came in hope to speed alone.

GRE. What, this gentleman will out-talk us all!

LUC. Sir, give him head: I know he'll prove a  
jade.

PET. Hortensio, to what end are all these words?

HOR. Sir, let me be so bold as ask you,  
Did you yet ever see Baptista's daughter?

TRA. No, sir; but hear I do that he hath two,  
The one as famous for a scolding tongue  
As is the other for beauteous modesty.

PET. Sir, sir, the first's for me; let her go by.

GRE. Yea, leave that labour to great Hercules ;  
And let it be more than Alcides' twelve.

PET. Sir, understand you this of me in sooth :  
The youngest daughter whom you hearken for  
Her father keeps from all access of suitors ;  
And will not promise her to any man  
Until the elder sister first be wed :  
The younger then is free and not before.

TRA. If it be so, sir, that you are the man  
Must stead us all and me amongst the rest ;

245 *jade*] a horse that cannot be trusted. Cf. *Jul. Caes.*, IV, ii, 26-27:

"Like *deceitful jades* Sink in the trial." Cotgrave translates "gallier," a jade, a dull horse. See II, i, 200, *infra*.

256 *hearken for*] wait for, seek. Cf. 1 *Hen.* IV, V, iv, 52: "That ever said I *hearken'd* for your death."

SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

And if you break the ice and do this feat,  
 Achieve the elder, set the younger free  
 For our access, whose hap shall be to have her  
 Will not so graceless be to be ingrate.

HOR. Sir, you say well and well you do conceive;  
 And since you do profess to be a suitor,  
 You must, as we do, gratify this gentleman,  
 To whom we all rest generally beholding.

270

TRA. Sir, I shall not be slack: in sign whereof,  
 Please ye we may contrive this afternoon,  
 And quaff carouses to our mistress' health,  
 And do as adversaries do in law,  
 Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.

GRU. BION. O excellent motion! Fellows, let's be  
 gone.

HOR. The motion's good indeed and be it so,  
 Petruchio, I shall be your ben venuto. [Exeunt.

---

263 *feat*] Rowe's emendation of the original reading *seeke*.

272 *contrive*] spend. Cf. Spenser's *Faery Queen*, II, ix, 48, 5: "Three  
 ages, such as mortal men *contrive*."



ACT SECOND — SCENE I — PADUA

A ROOM IN BAPTISTA'S HOUSE

*Enter KATHARINA and BIANCA*

BIANCA



GOOD SISTER, WRONG  
me not, nor wrong yourself,  
To make a bondmaid and a slave  
of me ;  
That I disdain : but for these  
other gawds,  
Unbind my hands, I'll pull them  
off myself,  
Yea, all my raiment, to my  
petticoat ;  
Or what you will command me  
will I do,  
So well I know my duty to my  
elders.

KATH. Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee, tell  
Whom thou lovest best : see thou dissemble not.

3 *for these other gawds*] as for these other toys, trifles, trifling ornaments. Theobald substituted *gawds* for the original reading *goods*, *i. c.* possessions. Neither reading is very pointed.

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

BIAN. Believe me, sister, of all the men alive 10  
I never yet beheld that special face  
Which I could fancy more than any other.

KATH. Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?

BIAN. If you affect him, sister, here I swear  
I'll plead for you myself, but you shall have him.

KATH. O then, belike, you fancy riches more :  
You will have Gremio to keep you fair.

BIAN. Is it for him you do envy me so ?  
Nay then you jest, and now I well perceive  
You have but jested with me all this while : 20  
I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands.

KATH. If that be jest, then all the rest was so.  
[*Strikes her.*]

*Enter BAPTISTA*

BAP. Why, how now, dame ! whence grows this  
insolence ?  
Bianca, stand aside. Poor girl ! she weeps.  
Go ply thy needle ; meddle not with her.  
For shame, thou hilding of a devilish spirit,  
Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong thee ?  
When did she cross thee with a bitter word ?

KATH. Her silence flouts me, and I'll be revenged.  
[*Flies after Bianca.*]

BAP. What, in my sight ? Bianca, get thee in. 30  
[*Exit Bianca.*]

KATH. What, will you not suffer me ? Nay, now I  
see  
She is your treasure, she must have a husband ;



THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT II

I must dance bare-foot on her wedding day  
And for your love to her lead apes in hell.

Talk not to me: I will go sit and weep

Till I can find occasion of revenge.

[*Exit.*]

BAP. Was ever gentleman thus grieved as I?

But who comes here?

*Enter GREMIO, LUCENTIO in the habit of a mean man ; PETRUCHIO, with HORTENSIO as a musician ; and TRANIO, with BIONDELLO bearing a lute and books*

GRE. Good morrow, neighbour Baptista.

BAP. Good morrow, neighbour Gremio. God save 40  
you, gentlemen !

PET. And you, good sir; Pray, have you not a daughter

Call'd Katharina, fair and virtuous ?

BAP. I have a daughter, sir, called Katharina.

GRE. You are too blunt: go to it orderly.

PET. You wrong me, Signior Gremio: give me leave.

I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,

That, hearing of her beauty and her wit,

Her affability and bashful modesty,

Her wondrous qualities and mild behaviour,

50

Am bold to show myself a forward guest

Within your house, to make mine eye the witness

Of that report which I so oft have heard.

And, for an entrance to my entertainment,

I do present you with a man of mine, [*Presenting Hortensio.*

34 *lead apes in hell*] The proverbial destiny of old maids and childless women.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

Cunning in music and the mathematics,  
To instruct her fully in those sciences,  
Whereof I know she is not ignorant :  
Accept of him, or else you do me wrong :  
His name is Licio, born in Mantua.

60

BAP. You're welcome, sir ; and he, for your good  
sake.

But for my daughter Katharine, this I know,  
She is not for your turn, the more my grief.

PET. I see you do not mean to part with her,  
Or else you like not of my company.

BAP. Mistake me not ; I speak but as I find.  
Whence are you, sir ? what may I call your name ?

PET. Petruchio is my name ; Antonio's son,  
A man well known throughout all Italy.

BAP. I know him well : you are welcome for his  
sake.

70

GRE. Saving your tale, Petruchio, I pray,  
Let us, that are poor petitioners, speak too :  
Baccare ! you are marvellous forward.

PET. O, pardon me, Signior Gremio ; I would fain be  
doing.

GRE. I doubt it not, sir ; but you will curse your  
wooing.

Neighbour, this is a gift very grateful, I am sure of  
it. To express the like kindness, myself, that have been

---

73 *Baccare* !] A cant interjection formed from "back" or "back-  
wards." It is usually met with in the proverbial phrase "Backare,  
quod Mortimer to his sow." See John Heywood's *Epigrams*,  
and *Ralph Roister Doister*, I, 2.

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    ACT II

---

more kindly beholding to you than any, freely give unto you this young scholar [*presenting Lucentio*], that hath been long studying at Rheims; as cunning in Greek, Latin, <sup>80</sup> and other languages, as the other in music and mathematics: his name is Cambio; pray, accept his service.

BAP. A thousand thanks, Signior Gremio. Welcome, good Cambio. But, gentle sir [*to Tranio*], methinks you walk like a stranger: may I be so bold to know the cause of your coming?

TRA. Pardon me, sir, the boldness is mine own;  
That, being a stranger in this city here,  
Do make myself a suitor to your daughter,  
Unto Bianca, fair and virtuous.  
Nor is your firm resolve unknown to me,  
In the preferment of the eldest sister.  
This liberty is all that I request,  
That, upon knowledge of my parentage,  
I may have welcome 'mongst the rest that woo  
And free access and favour as the rest:  
And, toward the education of your daughters,  
I here bestow a simple instrument,  
And this small packet of Greek and Latin books:  
If you accept them, then their worth is great. 100

BAP. Lucentio is your name; of whence, I pray?

TRA. Of Pisa, sir; son to Vincentio.

BAP. A mighty man of Pisa; by report  
I know him well: you are very welcome, sir.  
Take you the lute, and you the set of books;

---

101 *Lucentio . . . name*] Baptista probably learns Lucentio's name in private talk with Tranio, after his last speech.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

You shall go see your pupils presently.  
Holla, within !

*Enter a Servant*

Sirrah, lead these gentlemen  
To my daughters ; and tell them both,  
These are their tutors : bid them use them well.

*[Exit Servant, with Luc. and Hor., Bio. following.]*

We will go walk a little in the orchard, 110  
And then to dinner. You are passing welcome,  
And so I pray you all to think yourselves.

PET. Signior Baptista, my business asketh haste,  
And every day I cannot come to woo.  
You knew my father well, and in him me,  
Left solely heir to all his lands and goods,  
Which I have better'd rather than decreased :  
Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love,  
What dowry shall I have with her to wife ?

BAP. After my death the one half of my lands, 120  
And in possession twenty thousand crowns.

PET. And, for that dowry, I'll assure her of  
Her widowhood, be it that she survive me,  
In all my lands and leases whatsoever :

---

114 *every day . . . to woo*] The line echoes the burden of a popular contemporary ballad called *The Ingenious Braggadocio* : " And I cannot come every day to woo." Puttenham quotes a similar line (" I cannot come a wooing every day ") from an interlude by himself called " The Woer "; cf. *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), p. 213 (ed. Arber). For other popular songs cited by Petruchio, see line 316, *infra* : " We will be married o' Sunday," and IV, i, 124 and 129-130.

123 *widowhood*] the dower or jointure of a widow.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT II

Let specialties be therefore drawn between us,  
That covenants may be kept on either hand.

BAR. Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,  
That is, her love ; for that is all in all.

PET. Why, that is nothing ; for I tell you, father,  
I am as peremptory as she proud-minded ;  
And where two raging fires meet together  
They do consume the thing that feeds their fury :  
Though little fire grows great with little wind,  
Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all :  
So I to her and so she yields to me ;  
For I am rough and woo not like a babe.

BAP. Well mayst thou woo, and happy be thy speed!  
But be thou arm'd for some unhappy words.

PET. Ay, to the proof; as mountains are for winds,  
That shake not, though they blow perpetually. 140

*Re-enter* HORTENSIO, *with his head broke*

**BAP.** How now, my friend! why dost thou look so pale?

HOR. For fear, I promise you, if I look pale.

**BAP.** What, will my daughter prove a good musician?

HOR. I think she'll sooner prove a soldier :  
Iron may hold with her, but never lutes.

BAP. Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute?

HOR. Why, no ; for she hath broke the lute to me.  
I did but tell her she mistook her frets,  
And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering ;  
When, with a most impatient devilish spirit, 150

“Frets, call you these?” quoth she; “I’ll fume with them:”  
 And, with that word, she struck me on the head,  
 And through the instrument my pate made way;  
 And there I stood amazed for a while,  
 As on a pillory, looking through the lute;  
 While she did call me rascal fiddler  
 And twangling Jack; with twenty such vile terms,  
 As had she studied to misuse me so.

PET. Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench;  
 I love her ten times more than e’er I did: 160  
 O, how I long to have some chat with her!

BAP. Well, go with me and be not so discomfited:  
 Proceed in practice with my younger daughter;  
 She’s apt to learn and thankful for good turns.  
 Signior Petruchio, will you go with us,  
 Or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?

PET. I pray you do; I will attend her here,  
 [Exeunt Baptista, Gremio, Tranio, and Hortensio.  
 And woo her with some spirit when she comes.  
 Say that she rail; why then I’ll tell her plain  
 She sings as sweetly as a nightingale: 170

151 *Frets . . . fume*] “To fret and fume” is a very common expression, meaning “to get angry.” The quibble on “fret,” which also means “the stop of a guitar,” is repeated in *Hamlet*, III, ii, 362: “Though you can *fret* me, Yet you cannot play upon me.”

157 *twangling Jack*] strumming fool. Cf. *Tempest*, III, ii, 146, “*twangling* instruments.” For this reproachful use of “Jack” cf. 280, *infra*, “swearing Jack.”

169–173 *Say that she rail, etc.*] These lines, with a good many verbal alterations, were set to music by Sir Henry Bishop in a very popular song entitled “Should he upbraid.”

Say that she frown ; I 'll say she looks as clear  
 As morning roses newly wash'd with dew :  
 Say she be mute and will not speak a word ;  
 Then I 'll commend her volubility,  
 And say she uttereth piercing eloquence :  
 If she do bid me pack, I 'll give her thanks,  
 As though she bid me stay by her a week :  
 If she deny to wed, I 'll crave the day  
 When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.  
 But here she comes ; and now, Petruchio, speak. 180

*Enter KATHARINA*

Good morrow, Kate ; for that 's your name, I hear.

KATH. Well have you heard, but something hard of  
 hearing :

They call me Katharine that do talk of me.

PET. You lie, in faith ; for you are call'd plain Kate,  
 And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst ;  
 But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,  
 Kate of Kate-Hall, my super-dainty Kate,  
 For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,  
 Take this of me, Kate of my consolation ;  
 Hearing thy mildness praised in every town, 190  
 Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,  
 Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,  
 Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife.

KATH. Moved ! in good time : let him that moved  
 you hither

Remove you hence : I knew you at the first  
 You were a moveable.

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

PET. Why, what's a moveable?

KATH. A join'd-stool.

PET. Thou hast hit it: come, sit on me.

KATH. Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

PET. Women are made to bear, and so are you.

KATH. No such jade as you, if me you mean. 200

PET. Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee!

For, knowing thee to be but young and light, —

KATH. Too light for such a swain as you to catch;  
And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

PET. Should be! should — buzz!

KATH. Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

PET. O slow-wing'd turtle! shall a buzzard take  
thee?

KATH. Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

PET. Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too  
angry.

KATH. If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

PET. My remedy is then, to pluck it out. 210

KATH. Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.

PET. Who knows not where a wasp does wear his  
sting? In his tail.

KATH. In his tongue.

PET. Whose tongue?

KATH. Yours, if you talk of tails: and so farewell.

---

197 *A join'd-stool*] A stool in moveable parts, which admitted of its being folded up. For the proverbial phrase of mock apology, "I took you for a *joint-stool*," see *Lear*, III, vi, 51.

200 *No such jade*] See note on I, ii, 256, *supra*.



PET. What, with my tongue in your tail? nay, come again,

Good Kate; I am a gentleman.

KATH.                                That I'll try. [*She strikes him.*]

PET. I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again.

KATH. So may you lose your arms:

If you strike me, you are no gentleman;

And if no gentleman, why then no arms.

220

PET. A herald, Kate? O, put me in thy books!

KATH. What is your crest? a coxcomb?

PET. A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen.

KATH. No cock of mine; you crow too like a craven.

PET. Nay, come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.

KATH. It is my fashion, when I see a crab.

PET. Why, here's no crab; and therefore look not sour.

KATH. There is, there is.

PET. Then show it me.

KATH.                                Had I a glass, I would.

PET. What, you mean my face?

KATH.                                Well aim'd of such a young one.    230

PET. Now, by Saint George, I am too young for you.

KATH. Yet you are wither'd.

PET.                                        'Tis with cares.

KATH.                                        I care not.

---

221 *put me in thy books*] a quibble on the two senses of the phrase, viz., "taking one into favour," or "putting one in one's good books," and "enrolling one's name in the registers (of the Herald's College)." Cf. *Much Ado*, I, i, 63: "I see, lady, the gentleman is not in *your books*."

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

PET. Nay, hear you, Kate : in sooth you scape not so.

KATH. I chafe you, if I tarry : let me go.

PET. No, not a whit : I find you passing gentle.

'T was told me you were rough and coy and sullen,

And now I find report a very liar ;

For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,

But slow in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers :

Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance, 240

Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,

Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk,

But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,

With gentle conference, soft and affable.

Why does the world report that Kate doth limp ?

O slanderous world ! Kate like the hazel-twigg

Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue

As hazel-nuts and sweeter than the kernels.

O, let me see thee walk : thou dost not halt.

KATH. Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command. 250

PET. Did ever Dian so become a grove

As Kate this chamber with her princely gait ?

O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate ;

And then let Kate be chaste and Dian sportful !

KATH. Where did you study all this goodly speech ?

PET. It is extempore, from my mother-wit.

KATH. A witty mother ! witless else her son.

PET. Am I not wise ?

KATH. Yes ; keep you warm.

---

258 *keep you warm*] an adaptation of some such proverbial platitude as

"A wise man keeps out of the cold." The expression reappears in

*Much Ado*, I, i, 57 : "If he have wit enough to *keep himself warm*."

PET. Marry, so I mean, sweet Katharine, in thy bed :  
 And therefore, setting all this chat aside, 260  
 Thus in plain terms : your father hath consented  
 That you shall be my wife ; your dowry 'greed on ;  
 And, will you, nill you, I will marry you.  
 Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn ;  
 For, by this light, whereby I see thy beauty,  
 Thy beauty, that doth make me like thee well,  
 Thou must be married to no man but me ;  
 For I am he am born to tame you Kate,  
 And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate  
 Conformable as other household Kates. 270  
 Here comes your father : never make denial ;  
 I must and will have Katharine to my wife.

*Re-enter BAPTISTA, GREMIO, and TRANIO*

BAP. Now, Signior Petruchio, how speed you with  
 my daughter ?

PET. How but well, sir ? how but well ?  
 It were impossible I should speed amiss.

BAP. Why, how now, daughter Katharine ! in your  
 dumps ?

KATH. Call you me daughter ? now, I promise you  
 You have show'd a tender fatherly regard,  
 To wish me wed to one half lunatic ;  
 A mad-cap ruffian and a swearing Jack, 280  
 That thinks with oaths to face the matter out.

PET. Father, 't is thus : yourself and all the world,  
 That talk'd of her, have talk'd amiss of her :

280 *swearing Jack*] Cf. II, i, 157, *supra*, "twangling Jack."

If she be curst, it is for policy,  
For she's not froward, but modest as the dove ;  
She is not hot, but temperate as the morn ;  
For patience she will prove a second Grissel,  
And Roman Lucrece for her chastity :  
And to conclude, we have 'greed so well together,  
That upon Sunday is the wedding-day.

290

KATH. I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.

GRE. Hark, Petruchio ; she says she'll see thee hang'd  
first.

TRA. Is this your speeding ? nay, then, good night  
our part !

PET. Be patient, gentlemen ; I choose her for myself :  
If she and I be pleased, what's that to you ?

'Tis bargain'd 'twixt us twain, being alone,  
That she shall still be curst in company.

I tell you, 'tis incredible to believe  
How much she loves me : O, the kindest Kate !

She hung about my neck ; and kiss on kiss

300

She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath,

That in a twink she won me to her love.

O, you are novices ! 'tis a world to see,

---

287 *Grissel*] Griselda was the recognised type of patience in women. Her story, as told by Petrarch after Boccaccio, was reproduced in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and on it was based the play of *The Patient Grissel*, by Haughton, Chettle and Dekker (1603).

293 *our part*] our part of the bargain.

301 *She vied*] She vied with me in giving, she bid in competition with me. Cf. out-vied, i. e. outbid, line 377, *infra*.

303 *a world to see*] a wonderful sight ; a common Elizabethan expression.

How tame, when men and women are alone,  
A meacock wretch can make the curstest shrew.  
Give me thy hand, Kate : I will unto Venice,  
To buy apparel 'gainst the wedding-day.  
Provide the feast, father, and bid the guests ;  
I will be sure my Katherine shall be fine.

BAP. I know not what to say : but give me your  
hands ;

310

God send you joy, Petruchio ! 't is a match.

GRE. TRA. Amen, say we : we will be witnesses.

PET. Father, and wife, and gentlemen, adieu  
I will to Venice ; Sunday comes apace :  
We will have rings, and things, and fine array ,  
And, kiss me, Kate, we will be married o' Sunday.

[*Exeunt Petruchio and Katharina severally.*]

GRE. Was ever match clapp'd up so suddenly ?

BAP. Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,  
And venture madly on a desperate mart.

TRA. 'T was a commodity lay fretting by you :  
'T will bring you gain, or perish on the seas.

320

BAP. The gain I seek is, quiet in the match.

GRE. No doubt but he hath got a quiet catch.  
But now, Baptista, to your younger daughter :

305 *meacock*] spiritless. Cotgrave's *French-English Dict.* gives "milk-sop," and "worthless fellow" as synonyms for "a meacock."

316 *we will be married o' Sunday*] In *Ralph Roister Doister*, V, 6, the old song is given, with the refrain (thrice repeated) "I mun be married a Sunday." Petruchio quotes other old songs at line 114, *supra*, and at IV, i, 124 and 129-130, *infra*.

323 *got a quiet catch*] made a safe haul.

SCENE I    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

Now is the day we long have looked for :  
I am your neighbour, and was suitor first.

TRA. And I am one that love Bianca more  
Than words can witness, or your thoughts can guess.

GRE. Youngling, thou canst not love so dear as I.

TRA. Greybeard, thy love doth freeze.

GRE. But thine doth fry.

Skipper, stand back : 't is age that nourisheth. 331

TRA. But youth in ladies' eyes that flourisheth.

BAP. Content you, gentlemen : I will compound this  
strife :

'T is deeds must win the prize ; and he, of both,  
That can assure my daughter greatest dower  
Shall have my Bianca's love.

Say, Signior Gremio, what can you assure her ?

GRE. First, as you know, my house within the city  
Is richly furnished with plate and gold ;  
Basins and ewers to lave her dainty hands ; 340  
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry ;  
In ivory coffers I have stuff'd my crowns ;  
In cypress chests my arras counterpoints,  
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,  
Fine linen, Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl,  
Valance of Venice gold in needlework,  
Pewter and brass and all things that belong  
To house or housekeeping : then, at my farm

---

344 *tents, and canopies*] bed hangings.

345 *boss'd*] studded.

346 *Valance . . . needlework*] Drapery of the bedstead made of Venetian lace in gold thread.

I have a hundred milch-kine to the pail,  
 Sixscore fat oxen standing in my stalls, 350  
 And all things answerable to this portion.  
 Myself am struck in years, I must confess ;  
 And if I die to-morrow, this is hers,  
 If whilst I live she will be only mine.

TRA. That “only” came well in. Sir, list to me :  
 I am my father’s heir and only son :  
 If I may have your daughter to my wife,  
 I’ll leave her houses three or four as good,  
 Within rich Pisa walls, as any one  
 Old Signior Gremio has in Padua ; 360  
 Besides two thousand ducats by the year  
 Of fruitful land, all which shall be her jointure.

What, have I pinch’d you, Signior Gremio ?  
 GRE. Two thousand ducats by the year of land !  
 My land amounts not to so much in all :  
 That she shall have ; besides an argosy  
 That now is lying in Marseilles’ road.  
 What, have I choked you with an argosy ?

TRA. Gremio, ’t is known my father hath no less  
 Than three great argosies ; besides two galliasses, 370  
 And twelve tight galleys : these I will assure her,  
 And twice as much, whate’er thou offer’st next.

GRE. Nay, I have offer’d all, I have no more ;  
 And she can have no more than all I have :  
 If you like me, she shall have me and mine.

---

349 *milch-kine to the pail*] cows for milking.

363 *pinch’d*] got the better of, hurt.

# SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

TRA. Why, then the maid is mine from all the world,  
By your firm promise : Gremio is out-vied.

BAP. I must confess your offer is the best ;  
And, let your father make her the assurance,  
She is your own ; else, you must pardon me, 380  
If you should die before him, where's her dower ?

TRA. That's but a cavil : he is old, I young.

GRE. And may not young men die, as well as old ?

BAP. Well, gentlemen,  
I am thus resolved : on Sunday next you know  
My daughter Katharine is to be married :  
Now, on the Sunday following, shall Bianca  
Be bride to you, if you make this assurance ;  
If not, to Signior Gremio :  
And so, I take my leave, and thank you both. 390

GRE. Adieu, good neighbour. [*Exit Baptista.*]

Now I fear thee not :  
Sirrah young gamester, your father were a fool  
To give thee all, and in his waning age  
Set foot under thy table : tut, a toy !  
An old Italian fox is not so kind, my boy. [*Exit.*]

TRA. A vengeance on your crafty wither'd hide !  
Yet I have faced it with a card of ten.  
'Tis in my head to do my master good :

377 *out-vied*] out-bid ; see line 301, *supra*.

388 *if . . . assurance*] if you give this security.

397 *a card of ten*] a card of ten spots, which might, when skilfully played, count highest in "primero" and other contemporary games.  
Cf. *Day's Law tricks* (1608) Act V : "I may be outfaced of myself, with a card of ten."



THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    ACT II

---

I see no reason but supposed Lucentio  
Must get a father, call'd — supposed Vincentio ;                      400  
And that's a wonder : fathers commonly  
Do get their children ; but in this case of wooing,  
A child shall get a sire, if I fail not of my cunning. [*Exit.*]



ACT THIRD — SCENE I — PADUA

*BAPTISTA'S HOUSE*

*Enter LUCENTIO, HORTENSIO, and BIANCA*

LUCENTIO



IDDLER, FORBEAR;  
you grow too forward, sir:  
Have you so soon forgot the  
entertainment  
Her sister Katharine welcomed  
you withal?

HOR. But, wrangling pedant,  
this is  
The patroness of heavenly har-  
mony:  
Then give me leave to have  
prerogative;  
And when in music we have  
spent an hour,

Your lecture shall have leisure for as much.

LUC. Preposterous ass, that never read so far  
To know the cause why music was ordain'd!  
Was it not to refresh the mind of man

10

After his studies or his usual pain ?  
Then give me leave to read philosophy,  
And while I pause, serve in your harmony.

HOR. Sirrah, I will not bear these braves of thine.

BIAN. Why, gentlemen, you do me double wrong,  
To strive for that which resteth in my choice :  
I am no breeching scholar in the schools ;  
I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,  
But learn my lessons as I please myself. 20  
And, to cut off all strife, here sit we down :  
Take you your instrument, play you the whiles ;  
His lecture will be done ere you have tuned.

HOR. You'll leave his lecture when I am in tune ?

LUC. That will be never : tune your instrument.

BIAN. Where left we last ?

LUC. Here, madam :

“ Hic ibat Simois ; hic est Sigeia tellus ;  
Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.”

BIAN. Construe them. 30

LUC. “ Hic ibat,” as I told you before, — “ Simois,”  
I am Lucentio, — “ hic est,” son unto Vincentio of Pisa,  
— “ Sigeia tellus,” disguised thus to get your love ; —  
“ Hic steterat,” and that Lucentio that comes a-wooing,

12 *his usual pain*] his customary toil.

18 *breeching scholar*] a boy, fit to be breeched or flogged. “ A breeching boy ” is common in the same sense.

28-29 *Hic ibat, etc.*] From Ovid's *Heroides*, I, 33, 34. Ovid is causing a Greek soldier to paint with wine on a table the disposition of the opposing armies at Troy. The line reads in Ovid : “ *Hæc ibat Simois, hæc est Sigeia tellus.*”

— “Priami,” is my man Tranio, — “regia,” bearing my port, — “celsa senis,” that we might beguile the old pantaloon.

HOR. Madam, my instrument’s in tune.

BIAN. Let’s hear. O fie! the treble jars.

LUC. Spit in the hole, man, and tune again.

BIAN. Now let me see if I can construe it: 40

“Hic ibat Simois,” I know you not, — “hic est Sigeia tellus,” I trust you not, — “Hic steterat Priami,” take heed he hear us not, — “regia,” presume not, — “celsa senis,” despair not.

HOR. Madam, ’tis now in tune.

LUC. All but the base.

HOR. The base is right; ’tis the base knave that jars.

[*Aside*] How fiery and forward our pedant is!

Now, for my life, the knave doth court my love:

Pedascule, I’ll watch you better yet.

BIAN. In time I may believe, yet I mistrust.

LUC. Mistrust it not; for, sure, Æacides 50

Was Ajax, call’d so from his grandfather.

BIAN. I must believe my master; else, I promise you,

I should be arguing still upon that doubt:

But let it rest. Now, Licio, to you:

Good masters, take it not unkindly, pray,

That I have been thus pleasant with you both.

<sup>36</sup> *the old pantaloon*] Cf. *supra*, I, i, 47, note.

<sup>48</sup> *Pedascule*] Apparently a contemptuous diminutive of “pedant.”

No other example of the word is found.

HOR. You may go walk, and give me leave a while :  
My lessons make no music in three parts.

LUC. Are you so formal, sir ? well, I must wait,  
[*Aside*] And watch withal ; for, but I be deceived, 60  
Our fine musician groweth amorous.

HOR. Madam, before you touch the instrument,  
To learn the order of my fingering,  
I must begin with rudiments of art ;  
To teach you gamut in a briefer sort,  
More pleasant, pithy, and effectual,  
Than hath been taught by any of my trade :  
And there it is in writing, fairly drawn.

BIAN. Why, I am past my gamut long ago.

HOR. Yet read the gamut of Hortensio. 70

BIAN. [*reads*] “ ‘ Gamut ’ I am, the ground of all accord,  
‘ A re,’ to plead Hortensio’s passion ;  
‘ B mi,’ Bianca, take him for thy lord,  
‘ C fa ut,’ that loves with all affection :  
‘ D sol re,’ one clef, two notes have I :  
‘ E la mi,’ show pity, or I die.”

Call you this gamut ? tut, I like it not :  
Old fashions please me best ; I am not so nice,  
To change true rules for old inventions.

---

65 *gamut*] the scale in music. The word is derived from “gamma,”  
the name of the letter “g” in Greek, after which the lowest note  
in the musical scale was called. Cf. *Pathway to Music* (1596):  
“It is needfull for him that will learne to sing truely, to understand  
his Scale, or (as they commonly call it) the *Gamma ut*.”

79 *change . . . inventions*] The Second Folio substituted *change* for the

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

*Enter a Servant*

SERV. Mistress, your father prays you leave your  
books,

80

And help to dress your sister's chamber up :  
You know to-morrow is the wedding-day.

BIAN. Farewell, sweet masters both ; I must be gone.  
*[Exeunt Bianca and Servant.]*

LUC. Faith, mistress, then I have no cause to stay.  
*[Exit.]*

HOR. But I have cause to pry into this pedant :  
Methinks he looks as though he were in love :  
Yet if thy thoughts, Bianca, be so humble,  
To cast thy wandering eyes on every stale,  
Seize thee that list : if once I find thee ranging,  
Hortensio will be quit with thee by changing. *[Exit.]* 90

### SCENE II — PADUA

#### BEFORE BAPTISTA'S HOUSE

*Enter BAPTISTA, GREMIO, TRANIO, KATHARINA, BIANCA, LUCENTIO,  
and others, attendants*

BAP. Signior Lucentio [*To Tranio*], this is the 'pointed  
day.  
That Katharine and Petruchio should be married,

---

*charge of the First Folio, which was an obvious misprint ; old was  
altered unnecessarily by Theobald to odd, an alteration which has  
been very widely adopted.*



SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

BAP. Go, girl ; I cannot blame thee now to weep ;  
For such an injury would vex a very saint,  
Much more a shrew of thy impatient humour.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

BION. Master, master ! news, old news, and such 30  
news as you never heard of !

BAP. Is it new and old too ? how may that be ?

BION. Why, is it not news, to hear of Petruchio's  
coming ?

BAP. Is he come ?

BION. Why, no, sir.

BAP. What then ?

BION. He is coming.

BAP. When will he be here ?

BION. When he stands where I am and sees you there.

TRA. But say, what to thine old news ?

40

BION. Why, Petruchio is coming in a new hat and  
an old jerkin, a pair of old breeches thrice turned, a  
pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled,  
another laced, an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town-  
armoury, with a broken hilt, and chapeless ; with two  
broken points : his horse hipped with an old mothy sad-  
dle and stirrups of no kindred ; besides, possessed with  
the glanders and like to mose in the chine ; troubled

---

43 *candle-cases*] boxes to keep candles in.

46 *horse hipped*] This list of diseases in horses is conceived in a  
Rabelaisian vein. There is no good ground for doubting, with  
some critics, Shakespeare's responsibility for it.



with the lampass, infected with the fashions, full of windgalls, sped with spavins, rayed with the yellows, 50 past cure of the fives, stark spoiled with the staggers, begnawn with the bots, swayed in the back and shoulder-shotten; near-legged before and with a half-cheeked bit and a head-stall of sheep's leather which, being restrained to keep him from stumbling, hath been often burst and now repaired with knots; one girth six times pieced and a woman's crupper of velure, which hath two letters for her name fairly set down in studs, and here and there pieced with pack-thread.

BAP. Who comes with him?

60

BION. O, sir, his lackey, for all the world caparisoned like the horse; with a linen stock on one leg, and a kersey boot-hose on the other, gartered with a red and blue list; an old hat, and "the humour of forty fancies"

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49 *fashions*] A corruption of the French word "farcin," a disease in horses. Cf. Dekker's *Guls Hornbook* (1609): "*Fashions* was then counted a disease, and horses died of it."

51 *fives*] "Fives," like "fashions" is a corruption of a French word. The disease, which is correctly known as "avives" or "vives," is an inflammation of the glands of the ear.

64 "*humour of forty fancies*" ] The inverted commas are not found in the First Folio; they appear in the Quarto reprint of 1631. Petruchio's hat was adorned with a whimsical knot of ribbons. "Fancies" was applied to a bundle of ribbons of variegated colour. Peacham in his *Worth of a Penny* describes "a weather-beaten *fancy* worn (in a hat) 'for fashion's sake.'" Cf. Brome's *Mad Couple* (1652), Prologue: "I've a new Suite, And Ribbons fashion-able, yclipt *Fancies*." Sir John Davies in his *Epigrams* (1598) refuses to follow the manner of the desperate lover and "some pied

SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

pricked in 't for a feather : a monster, a very monster in apparel, and not like a Christian footboy or a gentleman's lackey.

TRA. 'T is some odd humour pricks him to this fashion ;  
Yet oftentimes he goes but mean-apparell'd.

BAP. I am glad he 's come, howsoe'er he comes. 70

BION. Why, sir, he comes not.

BAP. Didst thou not say he comes ?

BION. Who ? that Petruchio came ?

BAP. Ay, that Petruchio came.

BION. No, sir ; I say his horse comes, with him on his back.

BAP. Why, that 's all one.

BION. Nay, by Saint Jamy,

I hold you a penny,

A horse and a man

Is more than one,

And yet not many. 80

*Enter PETRUCHIO and GRUMIO*

PET. Come, where be these gallants ? who's at home ?

BAP. You are welcome, sir.

PET. And yet I come not well.

BAP. And yet you halt not.

---

colours in my bonnet stick." "Fancy-work" and "fancy dress" are expressions of a cognate significance. "The humour of forty fancies" resembles the title of contemporary song-books. Cf. Thomas Ravenscroft's "*Melismata: Musical Phancies fitting the Court, Citie and Country Humours,*" 1611.

TRA. Not so well apparell'd  
As I wish you were.

PET. Were it better, I should rush in thus.  
But where is Kate ? where is my lovely bride ?  
How does my father ? Gentles, methinks you frown :  
And wherefore gaze this goodly company, 90  
As if they saw some wondrous monument,  
Some comet or unusual prodigy ?

BAP. Why, sir, you know this is your wedding-day :

First were we sad, fearing you would not come ;  
Now sadder, that you come so unprovided.  
Fie, doff this habit, shame to your estate,  
An eye-sore to our solemn festival !

TRA. And tell us, what occasion of import  
Hath all so long detain'd you from your wife,  
And sent you hither so unlike yourself? 100

PET. Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to hear :  
Sufficeth, I am come to keep my word,  
Though in some part enforced to digress ;  
Which, at more leisure, I will so excuse  
As you shall well be satisfied withal.  
But where is Kate ? I stay too long from her :  
The morning wears, 't is time we were at church.

TRA. See not your bride in these unreverent robes :  
Go to my chamber ; put on clothes of mine.

PET. Not I, believe me : thus I'll visit her. 110

BAP. But thus, I trust, you will not marry her.

103 *digress*] deviate from my promised action.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

PET. Good sooth, even thus ; therefore ha' done with words :

To me she's married, not unto my clothes :  
 Could I repair what she will wear in me,  
 As I can change these poor accoutrements,  
 'T were well for Kate and better for myself.  
 But what a fool am I to chat with you,  
 When I should bid good morrow to my bride,  
 And seal the title with a lovely kiss !

[*Exeunt Petruchio and Grumio.*]

TRA. He hath some meaning in his mad attire : 120  
 We will persuade him, be it possible,  
 To put on better ere he go to church.

BAP. I'll after him, and see the event of this.

[*Exeunt Baptista, Gremio, and attendants.*]

TRA. But to her love concerneth us to add  
 Her father's liking : which to bring to pass,  
 As I before imparted to your worship,  
 I am to get a man, — whate'er he be,  
 It skills not much, we'll fit him to our turn, —  
 And he shall be Vincentio of Pisa ;  
 And make assurance here in Padua 130  
 Of greater sums than I have promised.

114 *what . . . wear in me*] what she will wear out in me ; what worry she will cause me.

124 *But to her love . . . add*] The original reading is *But sir, Love*, which leaves the line defective. It is possible that "sir" is a misprint for "to her." The elliptical construction of a verb without any nominative is not uncommon in Elizabethan English. The meaning is, "It behoves us to add to her love her father's consent."

So shall you quietly enjoy your hope,  
And marry sweet Bianca with consent.

LUC. Were it not that my fellow-schoolmaster  
Doth watch Bianca's steps so narrowly,  
'T were good, methinks, to steal our marriage ;  
Which once perform'd, let all the world say no,  
I'll keep mine own, despite of all the world.

TRA. That by degrees we mean to look into,  
And watch our vantage in this business : 140  
We'll over-reach the greybeard, Gremio,  
The narrow-prying father, Minola,  
The quaint musician, amorous Licio ;  
All for my master's sake, Lucentio.

*Re-enter GREMIO*

Signior Gremio, came you from the church ?

GRE. As willingly as e'er I came from school.

TRA. And is the bride and bridegroom coming  
home ?

GRE. A bridegroom say you ? 't is a groom indeed,  
A grumbling groom, and that the girl shall find.

TRA. Curster than she ? why, 't is impossible. 150

GRE. Why, he's a devil, a devil, a very fiend.

TRA. Why, she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam.

GRE. Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him !  
I'll tell you, Sir Lucentio : when the priest  
Should ask, if Katharine should be his wife,  
"Ay, by gogs-wouns," quoth he ; and swore so loud,

---

136 *steal our marriage*] make our marriage clandestine.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

That, all amazed, the priest let fall the book ;  
And, as he stoop'd again to take it up,  
This mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff,  
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest : 160  
“ Now take them up,” quoth he, “ if any list.”

TRA. What said the wench when he rose again ?

GRE. Trembled and shook ; for why he stamp'd and  
swore,

As if the vicar meant to cozen him.

But after many ceremonies done,

He calls for wine : “ A health ! ” quoth he ; as if

He had been aboard, carousing to his mates

After a storm : quaff'd off the muscadel,

And threw the sops all in the sexton's face ;

Having no other reason

170

But that his beard grew thin and hungerly

And seem'd to ask him sops as he was drinking.

This done, he took the bride about the neck

And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack

That at the parting all the church did echo :

And I seeing this came thence for very shame ;

And after me, I know, the rout is coming.

Such a mad marriage never was before :

Hark, hark ! I hear the minstrels play.

[*Music.*

---

163-179] This passage was printed as prose in the First Folio, but rightly appeared as verse in the Second Folio.

166 *He calls for wine*] It was the common practice to drink sweet wine, usually muscadel or muscadine, in church at the end of the wedding ceremony.

# THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    ACT III

---

*Re-enter* PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, BIANCA, BAPTISTA, HORTENSIO,  
GRUMIO, *and Train*

PET. Gentlemen and friends, I thank you for your  
pains : 180

I know you think to dine with me to-day,  
And have prepared great store of wedding cheer ;  
But so it is, my haste doth call me hence,  
And therefore here I mean to take my leave.

BAP. Is 't possible you will away to-night ?

PET. I must away to-day, before night come :  
Make it no wonder ; if you knew my business,  
You would entreat me rather go than stay.  
And, honest company, I thank you all,  
That have beheld me give away myself 190  
To this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife :  
Dine with my father, drink a health to me ;  
For I must hence ; and farewell to you all.

TRA. Let us entreat you stay till after dinner.

PET. It may not be.

GRE.                                Let me entreat you.

PET. It cannot be.

KATH.                            Let me entreat you.

PET. I am content.

KATH.                            Are you content to stay ?

PET. I am content you shall entreat me stay ;  
But yet not stay, entreat me how you can.

KATH. Now, if you love me, stay.

PET.    Grumio, my horse. 200

GRU. Ay, sir, they be ready : the oats have eaten the  
horses.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

KATH. Nay, then,  
 Do what thou canst, I will not go to-day ;  
 No, nor to-morrow, not till I please myself.  
 The door is open, sir ; there lies your way ;  
 You may be jogging whiles your boots are green ;  
 For me, I 'll not be gone till I please myself :  
 'T is like you 'll prove a jolly surly groom,  
 That take it on you at the first so roundly. 210

PET. O Kate, content thee ; prithee, be not angry.

KATH. I will be angry : what hast thou to do ?  
 Father, be quiet : he shall stay my leisure.

GRE. Ay, marry, sir, now it begins to work.

KATH. Gentlemen, forward to the bridal dinner :  
 I see a woman may be made a fool,  
 If she had not a spirit to resist.

PET. They shall go forward, Kate, at thy command.  
 Obey the bride, you that attend on her ;  
 Go to the feast, revel and domineer, 220  
 Carouse full measure to her maidenhead,  
 Be mad and merry, or go hang yourselves :  
 But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.  
 Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret ;  
 I will be master of what is mine own :  
 She is my goods, my chattels ; she is my house,  
 My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
 My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing ;

---

207 *green*] fresh, new. The phrase "boots are green" seems to have been proverbial.

210 *That . . . roundly*] That at the outset behave so bluntly, so insolently. Cf. note, *supra*, I, ii, 57.







## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—PETRUCHIO'S COUNTRY HOUSE

*Enter GRUMIO*

GRUMIO



FIE, FIE ON ALL TIRED  
 jades, on all mad masters, and  
 all foul ways! Was ever man  
 so beaten? was ever man so  
 rayed? was ever man so weary?  
 I am sent before to make a fire,  
 and they are coming after to  
 warm them. Now, were not I  
 a little pot, and soon hot, my  
 very lips might freeze to my  
 teeth, my tongue to the roof  
 of my mouth, my heart in  
 my belly, ere I should come  
 by a fire to thaw me: but I, with blowing the  
 fire, shall warm myself; for, considering the weather,  
 a taller man than I will take cold. Holla, ho!  
 Curtis!

# THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    ACT IV

---

*Enter CURTIS*

CURT. Who is it that calls so coldly ?

GRU. A piece of ice : if thou doubt it, thou mayst slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a run but my head and my neck. A fire, good Curtis.

CURT. Is my master and his wife coming, Grumio ?

GRU. O, ay, Curtis, ay : and therefore fire, fire ; cast on no water.

CURT. Is she so hot a shrew as she's reported ?

GRU. She was, good Curtis, before this frost : but, thou knowest, winter tames man, woman, and beast ; for it hath tamed my old master, and my new mistress, and myself, fellow Curtis.

CURT. Away, you three-inch fool ! I am no beast.

GRU. Am I but three inches ? why, thy horn is a foot ; and so long am I at the least. But wilt thou make a fire, or shall I complain on thee to our mistress, whose hand, she being now at hand, thou shalt soon feel, to thy cold comfort, for being slow in thy hot office ?

CURT. I prithee, good Grumio, tell me, how goes the world ?

30

GRU. A cold world, Curtis, in every office but thine ; and therefore fire : do thy duty, and have thy duty ; for my master and mistress are almost frozen to death.

CURT. There's fire ready ; and therefore, good Grumio, the news.

---

16-17 *fire, fire . . . water*] a misquotation of the old popular catch, "Scotland burneth ; Fire, fire, fire, fire. Cast on some more water."

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

GRU. Why, "Jack, boy! ho! boy!" and as much news as thou wilt.

CURT. Come, you are so full of cony-catching!

GRU. Why, therefore fire; for I have caught extreme cold. Where's the cook? is supper ready, the house 40 trimmed, rushes strewed, cobwebs swept; the serving-men in their new fustian, their white stockings, and every officer his wedding-garment on? Be the jacks fair within, the jills fair without, the carpets laid, and every thing in order?

CURT. All ready; and therefore, I pray thee, news.

GRU. First, know, my horse is tired; my master and mistress fallen out.

CURT. How?

GRU. Out of their saddles into the dirt; and thereby hangs a tale. 50

CURT. Let's ha't, good Grumio.

GRU. Lend thine ear.

CURT. Here.

GRU. There.

[*Strikes him.*]

---

36 "*Jack, boy! ho! boy!*" The first words of an old round or catch in three parts (given in Ravenscroft's *Pammelia*, 1609), of which the first words are "Jack boy! ho! boy! news; the cat is in the well."

41 *rushes strewed*] The floors of Elizabethan houses were usually covered with rushes in place of carpets.

43-44 *jacks fair . . . carpets laid*] Grumio quibbles on the words "jacks" and "jills," which were used for men-servants and maid-servants respectively, as well as for two kinds of drinking vessels — of leather and metal respectively. The carpets were the tablecloths.

CURT. This is to feel a tale, not to hear a tale.

GRU. And therefore 't is called a sensible tale : and this cuff was but to knock at your ear, and beseech listening. Now I begin : *Imprimis*, we came down a foul hill, my master riding behind my mistress, —

CURT. Both of one horse ?

60

GRU. What 's that to thee ?

CURT. Why, a horse.

GRU. Tell thou the tale : but hadst thou not crossed me, thou shouldst have heard how her horse fell and she under her horse ; thou shouldst have heard in how miry a place, how she was bemoiled, how he left her with the horse upon her, how he beat me because her horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to pluck him off me, how he swore, how she prayed, that never prayed before, how I cried, how the horses ran away, 70 how her bridle was burst, how I lost my crupper, with many things of worthy memory, which now shall die in oblivion and thou return unexperienced to thy grave.

CURT. By this reckoning he is more shrew than she.

GRU. Ay ; and that thou and the proudest of you all shall find when he comes home. But what talk I of this ? Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop and the rest : let their heads be sleekly combed, their blue coats brushed, and their garters of an indifferent knit : let them curtsy with their 80 left legs, and not presume to touch a hair of my

---

79 *blue coats*] Blue was the ordinary colour of menservants' dress.

80 *indifferent knit*] ordinary texture, neither too fine nor too coarse.

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

master's horse-tail till they kiss their hands. Are they all ready ?

CURT. They are.

GRU. Call them forth.

CURT. Do you hear, ho ? you must meet my master to countenance my mistress !

GRU. Why, she hath a face of her own.

CURT. Who knows not that ?

GRU. Thou, it seems, that calls for company to countenance her.

90

CURT. I call them forth to credit her.

GRU. Why, she comes to borrow nothing of them.

*Enter four or five serving-men*

NATH. Welcome home, Grumio !

PHIL. How now, Grumio !

JOS. What, Grumio !

NICH. Fellow Grumio !

NATH. How now, old lad ?

GRU. Welcome, you ; — how now, you ; — what, you ; — fellow, you ; — and thus much for greeting. Now, my spruce companions, is all ready, and all things neat ?

100

---

86 *countenance* ] do grace or honour to. "Credit" (line 91) is used in much the same sense of "conferring credit on." Both words move Grumio to the like manner of quibbling. "Countenance" and "credit" are used in a similar connection in Greene's *Vpstart Courtier* (Greene's *Works*, ed. Grosart, XI, 230): "What is the end of service to a man, but to *countenance* himselfe and *credite* his maister with braue suites?"

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT IV

---

NATH. All things is ready. How near is our master?

GRU. E'en at hand, alighted by this; and therefore be not — Cock's passion, silence! I hear my master.

*Enter PETRUCHIO and KATHARINA*

PET. Where be these knaves? What, no man at door

To hold my stirrup nor to take my horse!

Where is Nathaniel, Gregory, Philip?

ALL SERV. Here, here, sir; here, sir.

PET. Here, sir! here, sir! here, sir! here sir!

You logger-headed and unpolish'd grooms!

What, no attendance? no regard? no duty?

110

Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

GRU. Here, sir; as foolish as I was before.

PET. You peasant swain! you whoreson malt-horse drudge!

Did I not bid thee meet me in the park,

And bring along these rascal knaves with thee?

GRU. Nathaniel's coat, sir, was not fully made,

And Gabriel's pumps were all unpink'd i' the heel;

There was no link to colour Peter's hat,

And Walter's dagger was not come from sheathing:

There were none fine but Adam, Ralph, and Gregory; 120

---

118 *link . . . hat*] Old hats were often blacked over with lampblack from a torch to give them an appearance of being new. Cf. *Mihil Mumchance* (1595?), a tract, wrongly attributed to Robert Greene, Sig. D. 2: "This cozenage is used likewise in selling old hats found upon dung-hills, — instead of newe, *blackt over with the smoake of an old linke*."

# SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The rest were ragged, old, and beggarly ;  
Yet, as they are, here are they come to meet you.

PET. Go, rascals, go, and fetch my supper in.

[*Exeunt servants.*]

[*Singing*] Where is the life that late I led —  
Where are those — Sit down, Kate, and welcome. —  
Soud, soud, soud, soud !

*Re-enter Servants with supper*

Why, when, I say ? Nay, good sweet Kate, be merry.  
Off with my boots, you rogues ! you villains, when ?

[*Sings*] It was the friar of orders grey,

As he forth walked on his way : —

130

Out, you rogue ! you pluck my foot awry :  
Take that, and mend the plucking off the other.

[*Strikes him.*]

Be merry, Kate. Some water, here ; what, ho !  
Where's my spaniel Troilus ? Sirrah, get you hence,

124 *Where is the life, etc.*] The same song is quoted by Pistol, 2 *Hen. IV*, V, iii, 139. The full text has not been discovered. Mention is made of it in the heading of a song in Clement Robinson's *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584) ed. Arber, p. 14 : " Dame Beauties reple to the Louer late at libertie : and now complaineth himselfe to be her captiue, Intituled : *Where is the life that late I led.*" Robinson's song forms a reply to the old ballad.

126 *Soud . . . soud*] An ejaculation expressive of fatigue.

129 *It was a friar of orders grey, etc.*] This is the sole fragment of the old ballad which has been preserved. Bishop Percy, in his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, developed these two lines into a long original poem. The well-known song, beginning " I am a friar of orders grey," is a modern composition by John Wall Callcott.



And bid my cousin Ferdinand come hither :  
 One, Kate, that you must kiss, and be acquainted with.  
 Where are my slippers ? Shall I have some water ?

*Enter one with water*

Come, Kate, and wash, and welcome heartily.  
 You whoreson villain ! will you let it fall ? [*Strikes him.*]

KATH. Patience, I pray you ; 't was a fault unwilling.

PET. A whoreson beetle-headed, flap-ear'd knave ! 141  
 Come, Kate, sit down ; I know you have a stomach.  
 Will you give thanks, sweet Kate ; or else shall I ?  
 What 's this ? mutton ?

FIRST SERV. Ay.

PET. Who brought it ?

PETER. I.

PET. 'T is burnt ; and so is all the meat.  
 What dogs are these ! where is the rascal cook ?  
 How durst you, villains, bring it from the dresser,  
 And serve it thus to me that love it not ?  
 There, take it to you, trenchers, cups, and all :  
 [*Throws the meat, &c. about the stage.*]

You heedless joltheads and unmanner'd slaves ! 150  
 What, do you grumble ? I'll be with you straight.

KATH. I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet :  
 The meat was well, if you were so contented.

PET. I tell thee, Kate, 't was burnt and dried away ;  
 And I expressly am forbid to touch it,

---

135 *cousin Ferdinand*] There is no other mention in the play of this personage.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

For it engenders choler, planteth anger ;  
And better 't were that both of us did fast,  
Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,  
Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh.  
Be patient ; to-morrow 't shall be mended, 160  
And, for this night, we 'll fast for company :  
Come, I will bring thee to thy bridal chamber. [*Exeunt.*]

*Re-enter Servants severally*

NATH. Peter, didst ever see the like ?  
PETER. He kills her in her own humour.

*Re-enter CURTIS*

GRU. Where is he ?  
CURT. In her chamber, making a sermon of continency to her ;  
And rails, and swears, and rates, that she, poor soul,  
Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak,  
And sits as one new-risen from a dream. 170  
Away, away ! for he is coming hither. [*Exeunt.*]

*Re-enter PETRUCHIO*

PET. Thus have I politicly begun my reign,  
And 't is my hope to end successfully.  
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty ;

---

158 *choleric*] Cf. *Com. of Errors*, II, ii, 61.

174 *seq.*] This and the next six lines develop imagery derived from the sport of falconry. The full-fed hawk or falcon is not deceived by the "lure" or decoy made to look like a pigeon. A better way to master the "haggard" or wild falcon is to keep it awake

And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged,  
 For then she never looks upon her lure.  
 Another way I have to man my haggard,  
 To make her come and know her keeper's call,  
 That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites  
 That bate and beat and will not be obedient. 180  
 She eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat ;  
 Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not ;  
 As with the meat, some undeserved fault  
 I'll find about the making of the bed ;  
 And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,  
 This way the coverlet, another way the sheets :  
 Ay, and amid this hurly I intend  
 That all is done in reverend care of her ;  
 And in conclusion she shall watch all night :  
 And if she chance to nod, I'll rail and brawl, 190  
 And with the clamour keep her still awake.  
 This is a way to kill a wife with kindness ;  
 And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.  
 He that knows better how to tame a shrew,  
 Now let him speak : 't is charity to show. [Exit.

or watchful, as is done with unruly kites that bate or flutter about and will not obey the falconer's call.

187 *intend*] pretend ; a common usage. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, ii, 32 : " *Intend* a kind of zeal."

192 *kill . . . kindness*] a proverbial expression, which at a later date suggested to Thomas Heywood the title of his play, *A Woman killed with Kindness* (1607).

194 *shrew*] This word here rhymes with "show," and thereby illustrates the contemporary pronunciation. See note on *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 46, and cf. *infra*, V, ii, 28 and 188.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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### SCENE II—PADUA

#### BEFORE BAPTISTA'S HOUSE

*Enter* TRANIO *and* HORTENSIO

TRA. Is't possible, friend Licio, that Mistress Bianca  
Doth fancy any other but Lucentio?

I tell you, sir, she bears me fair in hand.

HOR. Sir, to satisfy you in what I have said,  
Stand by and mark the manner of his teaching.

*Enter* BIANCA *and* LUCENTIO

LUC. Now, mistress, profit you in what you read?

BIAN. What, master, read you? first resolve me that.

LUC. I read that I profess, the Art to Love.

BIAN. And may you prove, sir, master of your art!

LUC. While you, sweet dear, prove mistress of my  
heart!

10

HOR. Quick proceeders, marry! Now, tell me, I pray,  
You that durst swear that your mistress Bianca  
Loved none in the world so well as Lucentio.

TRA. O spiteful love! unconstant womankind!  
I tell thee, Licio, this is wonderful.

HOR. Mistake no more: I am not Licio,  
Nor a musician, as I seem to be;  
But one that scorn to live in this disguise,  
For such a one as leaves a gentleman,  
And makes a god of such a cullion:  
Know, sir, that I am call'd Hortensio.

20

---

<sup>20</sup> *cullion*] Cf. Florio's *Italian-English Dictionary*, "coglione a *cuglion*, a gull, a meacoke."

TRA. Signior Hortensio, I have often heard  
Of your entire affection to Bianca ;  
And since mine eyes are witness of her lightness,  
I will with you, if you be so contented,  
Forswear Bianca and her love for ever.

HOR. See, how they kiss and court ! Signior Lucentio,  
Here is my hand, and here I firmly vow  
Never to woo her more, but do forswear her,  
As one unworthy all the former favours  
That I have fondly flatter'd her withal. 30

TRA. And here I take the like unfeigned oath,  
Never to marry with her though she would entreat :  
Fie on her ! see, how beastly she doth court him !

HOR. Would all the world but he had quite for-  
sworn !

For me, that I may surely keep mine oath,  
I will be married to a wealthy widow,  
Ere three days pass, which hath as long loved me  
As I have loved this proud disdainful haggard.  
And so farewell, Signior Lucentio. 40

Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks,  
Shall win my love : and so I take my leave,  
In resolution as I swore before.

[*Exit.*]

TRA. Mistress Bianca, bless you with such grace  
As 'longeth to a lover's blessed case !  
Nay, I have ta'en you napping, gentle love,  
And have forsworn you with Hortensio.

BIAN. Tranio, you jest : but have you both forsworn  
me ?

TRA. Mistress, we have.

LUC. Then we are rid of Licio.

TRA. I' faith, he'll have a lusty widow now, 50  
That shall be woo'd and wedded in a day.

BIAN. God give him joy!

TRA. Ay, and he'll tame her.

BIAN. He says so, Tranio.

TRA. Faith, he is gone unto the taming-school.

BIAN. The taming-school! what, is there such a place?

TRA. Ay, mistress, and Petruchio is the master;  
That teacheth tricks eleven and twenty long,  
To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

BION. O master, master, I have watch'd so long  
That I am dog-weary! but at last I spied 60  
An ancient angel coming down the hill,  
Will serve the turn.

TRA. What is he, Biondello?

BION. Master, a mercatante, or a pedant,

---

54 *Faith, etc.*] This and the next two lines are borrowed almost verbatim from the old play *The Taming of A Shrew*.

57 *tricks eleven and twenty long*] tricks of great intricacy or efficacy. There may be some reference to the game of cards, known as "one-and-thirty" (eleven *plus* twenty), or "bone-ace," to which Grumio has already alluded, I, ii, 32, *supra*.

61 *ancient angel*] Cf. Cotgrave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*, "Angelot à la grosse escaille: an old angel, and by Metaphor a fellow of the old, sound, honest and worthie stamp."

63 *mercatanie*] Cf. Florio's *Italian-English Dict.*, "Mercatante, a Marchant, a Marter, a Trader."

I know not what ; but formal in apparel,  
In gait and countenance surely like a father.

LUC. And what of him, Tranio ?

TRA. If he be credulous and trust my tale,  
I'll make him glad to seem Vincentio,  
And give assurance to Baptista Minola,  
As if he were the right Vincentio.  
Take in your love, and then let me alone.

70

[*Exeunt Lucentio and Bianca.*]

*Enter a Pedant*

PED. God save you, sir !

TRA. And you, sir ! you are welcome.  
Travel you far on, or are you at the farthest ?

PED. Sir, at the farthest for a week or two :  
But then up farther, and as far as Rome ;  
And so to Tripoli, if God lend me life.

TRA. What countryman, I pray ?

PED. Of Mantua.

TRA. Of Mantua, sir ? marry, God forbid !  
And come to Padua, careless of your life ?

PED. My life, sir ! how, I pray ? for that goes hard. 80

TRA. 'Tis death for any one in Mantua  
To come to Padua. Know you not the cause ?  
Your ships are stay'd at Venice ; and the Duke,  
For private quarrel 'twixt your duke and him,  
Hath publish'd and proclaim'd it openly :

---

81 '*Tis death . . . Mantua*] This looks like a reminiscence of *Com. of Errors*, I, i, 19-20 : "If any Syracusian born Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies."

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

'Tis marvel, but that you are but newly come,  
You might have heard it else proclaim'd about.

PED. Alas, sir, it is worse for me than so !  
For I have bills for money by exchange  
From Florence, and must here deliver them. 90

TRA. Well, sir, to do you courtesy,  
This will I do, and this I will advise you :  
First, tell me, have you ever been at Pisa ?

PED. Ay, sir, in Pisa have I often been ;  
Pisa renowned for grave citizens.

TRA. Among them know you one Vincentio ?

PED. I know him not, but I have heard of him ;  
A merchant of incomparable wealth.

TRA. He is my father, sir ; and, sooth to say,  
In countenance somewhat doth resemble you. 100

BION. As much as an apple doth an oyster, and all  
one. [*Aside.*]

TRA. To save your life in this extremity,  
This favour will I do you for his sake ;  
And think it not the worst of all your fortunes  
That you are like to Sir Vincentio.  
His name and credit shall you undertake,  
And in my house you shall be friendly lodged :  
Look that you take upon you as you should ;  
You understand me, sir : so shall you stay  
Till you have done your business in the city : 110  
If this be courtesy, sir, accept of it.

---

95 *Pisa . . . citizens*] This line has already appeared, I, i, 10, *supra*.

101 *apple . . . oyster*] a proverbial expression implying total want of  
similarity.



## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT IV

---

PED. O sir, I do ; and will repute you ever  
The patron of my life and liberty.

TRA. Then go with me to make the matter good.  
This, by the way, I let you understand ;  
My father is here look'd for every day,  
To pass assurance of a dower in marriage  
'Twixt me and one Baptista's daughter here :  
In all these circumstances I'll instruct you :  
Go with me to clothe you as becomes you. [*Exeunt.* 120

### SCENE III — A ROOM IN PETRUCHIO'S HOUSE

*Enter KATHARINA and GRUMIO*

GRU. No, no, forsooth ; I dare not for my life.

KATH. The more my wrong, the more his spite  
appears :

What, did he marry me to famish me ?  
Beggars, that come unto my father's door,  
Upon entreaty have a present alms ;  
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity :  
But I, who never knew how to entreat,  
Nor never needed that I should entreat,  
Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep ;  
With oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed : 10  
And that which spites me more than all these wants,  
He does it under name of perfect love ;  
As who should say, if I should sleep or eat,

---

117 *To pass assurance*] To make settlement. Cf. *infra*, IV, iv, 45 and 89.

SCENE III THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

'T were deadly sickness or else present death.

I prithee go and get me some repast ;

I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

GRU. What say you to a neat's foot ?

KATH. 'T is passing good : I prithee let me have it.

GRU. I fear it is too choleric a meat.

How say you to a fat tripe finely broil'd ?

20

KATH. I like it well : good Grumio, fetch it me.

GRU. I cannot tell ; I fear 't is choleric.

What say you to a piece of beef and mustard ?

KATH. A dish that I do love to feed upon.

GRU. Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.

KATH. Why then, the beef, and let the mustard rest.

GRU. Nay then, I will not : you shall have the mustard,

Or else you get no beef of Grumio.

KATH. Then both, or one, or any thing thou wilt.

GRU. Why then, the mustard without the beef.

30

KATH. Go, get thee gone, thou false deluding slave,

[Beats him.

That feed'st me with the very name of meat :

Sorrow on thee and all the pack of you

That triumph thus upon my misery !

Go, get thee gone, I say.

*Enter PETRUCHIO and HORTENSIO with meat*

PET. How fares my Kate ? What, sweeting, all  
amort ?

---

36 *all amort*] downcast, dispirited. Shakespeare only uses the expression once again, *1 Hen. VI*, III, ii, 124. The word is a corruption

HOR. Mistress, what cheer ?

KATH. Faith, as cold as can be.

PET. Pluck up thy spirits ; look cheerfully upon me.  
 Here, love ; thou see'st how diligent I am  
 To dress thy meat myself and bring it thee : 40  
 I am sure, sweet Kate, this kindness merits thanks.  
 What, not a word ? Nay, then thou lovest it not ;  
 And all my pains is sorted to no proof.  
 Here, take away this dish.

KATH. I pray you, let it stand.

PET. The poorest service is repaid with thanks ;  
 And so shall mine, before you touch the meat.

KATH. I thank you, sir.

HOR. Signior Petruchio, fie ! you are to blame.  
 Come, Mistress Kate, I'll bear you company.

PET. Eat it up all, Hortensio, if thou lovest me. [*Aside*.  
 Much good do it unto thy gentle heart ! 51  
 Kate, eat apace : and now, my honey love,  
 Will we return unto thy father's house,  
 And revel it as bravely as the best,  
 With silken coats and caps and golden rings,  
 With ruffs and cuffs and fardingales and things ;  
 With scarfs and fans and double change of bravery,  
 With amber bracelets, beads and all this knavery.

---

of the French "à la mort," which is also found in the Anglicised form "alamort ;" cf. Fanshawe's *Lusiad*, V, 85, "to cheer the *alamort*."

43 all . . . proof] all my labour is to no purpose, has proved of no value. "Proof" here is used for "approof," *i. e.* "value."

# SCENE III THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

What, hast thou dined? The<sup>'</sup>tailor stays thy leisure,  
To deck thy body with his ruffling treasure.

60

*Enter Tailor*

Come, tailor, let us see these ornaments;  
Lay forth the gown.

*Enter Haberdasher*

What news with you, sir?

HAB. Here is the cap your worship did bespeak.

PET. Why, this was moulded on a porringer;  
A velvet dish: fie, fie! 't is lewd and filthy:  
Why, 't is a cockle or a walnut-shell,  
A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap:  
Away with it! come, let me have a bigger.

KATH. I'll have no bigger: this doth fit the time,  
And gentlewomen wear such caps as these.

70

PET. When you are gentle, you shall have one too,  
And not till then.

HOR. That will not be in haste. [*Aside.*]

KATH. Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak;  
And speak I will; I am no child, no babe:  
Your betters have endured me say my mind,  
And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.  
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,

---

60 *ruffling treasure*] flaunting finery.

64 *moulded . . . porringer*] In *Hen. VIII*, V, iv, 46, a haberdasher's wife is derisively credited with wearing on her head a "pinked porringer," i. e. a hat fashioned like a dish with a fluted border.

Or else my heart concealing it will break ;  
And rather than it shall, I will be free  
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words. 80

PET. Why, thou say'st true ; it is a paltry cap,  
A custard-coffin, a bauble, a silken pie :  
I love thee well, in that thou likest it not.

KATH. Love me or love me not, I like the cap ;  
And it I will have, or I will have none.

[*Exit Haberdasher.*]

PET. Thy gown ? why, ay : come, tailor, let us see 't.  
O mercy, God ! what masquing stuff is here ?  
What 's this ? a sleeve ? 't is like a demi-cannon :  
What, up and down, carved like an apple-tart ?  
Here 's snip and nip and cut and slish and slash, 90  
Like to a censer in a barber's shop :  
Why, what, i' devil's name, tailor, call'st thou this ?

HOR. I see she 's like to have ncither cap nor gown.  
[*Aside.*]

TAI. You bid me make it orderly and well,  
According to the fashion and the time.

PET. Marry, and did ; but if you be remember'd,  
I did not bid you mar it to the time.

82 *custard-coffin*] "Coffin" was the usual term for the paste covering a  
"custard," a word usually then applied to the contents of a meat  
or fruit pie. Cf. *Tit. Andr.*, V, ii, 189 : "And of the paste a *coffin*  
I will make."

87 *masquing stuff*] dress fitted for a masquerade.

88 *demi-cannon*] a large gun, of about six and one-half inches' bore.

91 *censer*] A brazier or fire-pan, in which sweet herbs were kept  
burning in a barber's shop. The cover was liberally perforated.

### SCENE III THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

Go, hop me over every kennel home,  
For you shall hop without my custom, sir :  
I'll none of it : hence ! make your best of it. 100

KATH. I never saw a better-fashion'd gown,  
More quaint, more pleasing, nor more commendable :  
Belike you mean to make a puppet of me.

PET. Why, true ; he means to make a puppet of thee.

TAL. She says your worship means to make a puppet  
of her.

PET. O monstrous arrogance ! Thou liest, thou  
thread, thou thimble,  
Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail !  
Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket thou !  
Braved in mine own house with a skein of thread ? 110  
Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant ;  
Or I shall so be-mete thee with thy yard,  
As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou livest !  
I tell thee, I, that thou hast marr'd her gown.

TAL. Your worship is deceived ; the gown is made  
Just as my master had direction :  
Grumio gave order how it should be done.

GRU. I gave him no order ; I gave him the stuff.

TAL. But how did you desire it should be made ?

GRU. Marry, sir, with needle and thread. 120

TAL. But did you not request to have it cut ?

GRU. Thou hast faced many things.

TAL. I have.

---

122 *faced*] trimmed with facings; with the quibbling implication of  
"confronted impudently" or "defied."

GRU. Face not me: thou hast braved many men; brave not me; I will neither be faced nor braved. I say unto thee, I bid thy master cut out the gown; but I did not bid him cut it to pieces: ergo, thou liest.

TAI. Why, here is the note of the fashion to testify.

PET. Read it.

GRU. The note lies in 's throat, if he say I said so. 130

TAI. [*reads*] "Imprimis, a loose-bodied gown:"

GRU. Master, if ever I said loose-bodied gown, sew me in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a bottom of brown thread: I said a gown.

PET. Proceed.

TAI. [*reads*] "With a small compassed cape:"

GRU. I confess the cape.

TAI. [*reads*] "With a trunk sleeve:"

GRU. I confess two sleeves.

TAI. [*reads*] "The sleeves curiously cut." 140

PET. Ay, there's the villany.

GRU. Error i' the bill, sir; error i' the bill. I commanded the sleeves should be cut out, and sewed up again; and that I'll prove upon thee, though thy little finger be armed in a thimble.

TAI. This is true that I say: an I had thee in place where, thou shouldst know it.

GRU. I am for thee straight: take thou the bill, give me thy mete-yard, and spare not me.

136 *compassed*] circular. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, I, ii, 106: "the compassed window," *i. e.* circular, bow window.

148 *take . . . bill*] a quibble on the two senses of the word, *i. e.* a tradesman's account and a foot-soldier's weapon.

SCENE III THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

HOR. God-a-mercy, Grumio ! then he shall have no odds. 150

PET. Well, sir, in brief, the gown is not for me.

GRU. You are i' the right, sir : 't is for my mistress.

PET. Go, take it up unto thy master's use.

GRU. Villain, not for thy life : take up my mistress' gown for thy master's use !

PET. Why, sir, what's your conceit in that ?

GRU. O, sir, the conceit is deeper than you think for : Take up my mistress' gown to his master's use !

O, fie, fie, fie !

PET. Hortensio, say thou wilt see the tailor paid. 160  
[*Aside.*]

Go take it hence ; be gone, and say no more.

HOR. Tailor, I'll pay thee for thy gown to-morrow : Take no unkindness of his hasty words :

Away ! I say ; commend me to thy master. [*Exit Tailor.*]

PET. Well, come, my Kate ; we will unto your father's

Even in these honest mean habiliments :

Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor ;

For 't is the mind that makes the body rich ;

And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,

So honour peereth in the meanest habit. 170

What is the jay more precious than the lark,

Because his feathers are more beautiful ?

Or is the adder better than the eel,

Because his painted skin contents the eye ?

---

170 *peereth*] appeareth.



O, no, good Kate ; neither art thou the worse  
 For this poor furniture and mean array.  
 If thou account'st it shame, lay it on me ;  
 And therefore frolic : we will hence forthwith,  
 To feast and sport us at thy father's house.  
 Go, call my men, and let us straight to him ; 180  
 And bring our horses unto Long-lane end ;  
 There will we mount, and thither walk on foot.  
 Let 's see ; I think 't is now some seven o'clock,  
 And well we may come there by dinner-time.  
 KATH. I dare assure you, sir, 't is almost two ;  
 And 't will be supper-time ere you come there.  
 PET. It shall be seven ere I go to horse :  
 Look, what I speak, or do, or think to do,  
 You are still crossing it. Sirs, let 't alone :  
 I will not go to-day ; and ere I do, 190  
 It shall be what o'clock I say it is.  
 HOR. Why, so this gallant will command the sun.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — PADUA

BEFORE BAPTISTA'S HOUSE

*Enter* TRANIO, *and the Pedant dressed like* VINCENTIO

TRA. Sir, this is the house : please it you that I call ?

PED. Ay, what else ? and but I be deceived

---

181 *Long-lane end*] a reference to the still existing London thoroughfare of Long Lane running from Smithfield to Aldersgate Street.

2 *Ay, what else ? . . . deceived*] Why, certainly ! and unless I am deceived.

SCENE IV THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

Signior Baptista may remember me,  
Near twenty years ago, in Genoa,  
Where we were lodgers at the Pegasus.

TRA. 'Tis well ; and hold your own, in any case,  
With such austerity as 'longeth to a father.

PED. I warrant you.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

But, sir, here comes your boy ;  
'T were good he were school'd.

TRA. Fear you not him. Sirrah Biondello, 10  
Now do your duty thoroughly, I advise you :  
Imagine 't were the right Vincentio.

BION. Tut, fear not me.

TRA. But hast thou done thy errand to Baptista ?

BION. I told him that your father was at Venice ;  
And that you look'd for him this day in Padua.

TRA. Thou 'rt a tall fellow : hold thee that to drink.  
Here comes Baptista : set your countenance, sir.

*Enter BAPTISTA and LUCENTIO*

Signior Baptista, you are happily met.

[*To the Pedant*] Sir, this is the gentleman I told you of : 20  
I pray you, stand good father to me now,  
Give me Bianca for my patrimony.

PED. Soft, son !

---

5 *Pegasus*] There was an inn bearing the sign of the Pegasus in Cheap-side. Cf. *The Returne from Parnassus* (1606) : "Meet me an hour hence at the sign of the *Pegasus* in Cheapside."

Sir, by your leave : having come to Padua  
 To gather in some debts, my son Lucentio  
 Made me acquainted with a weighty cause  
 Of love between your daughter and himself :  
 And, for the good report I hear of you,  
 And for the love he beareth to your daughter,  
 And she to him, to stay him not too long, 30  
 I am content, in a good father's care,  
 To have him match'd ; and, if you please to like  
 No worse than I, upon some agreement  
 Me shall you find ready and willing  
 With one consent to have her so bestow'd ;  
 For curious I cannot be with you,  
 Signior Baptista, of whom I hear so well.

BAP. Sir, pardon me in what I have to say :  
 Your plainness and your shortness please me well.  
 Right true it is, your son Lucentio here 40  
 Doth love my daughter, and she loveth him,  
 Or both dissemble deeply their affections :  
 And therefore, if you say no more than this,  
 That like a father you will deal with him,  
 And pass my daughter a sufficient dower,  
 The match is made, and all is done :  
 Your son shall have my daughter with consent.

TRA. I thank you, sir. Where then do you know best  
 We be affied and such assurance ta'en  
 As shall with either part's agreement stand ? 50

45 *pass*] make conveyance. Cf. *supra*, IV, ii, 117, and *infra*, 89.

"Pass" is again used in the somewhat less technical sense of

"transact," *infra*, line 57: "We'll *pass* the business."

SCENE IV THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

BAP. Not in my house, Lucentio ; for, you know,  
Pitchers have ears, and I have many servants :  
Besides, old Gremio is hearkening still ;  
And happily we might be interrupted.

TRA. Then at my lodging, an it like you :  
There doth my father lie ; and there, this night,  
We 'll pass the business privately and well.  
Send for your daughter by your servant here ;  
My boy shall fetch the scrivener presently.  
The worst is this, that, at so slender warning, 60  
You are like to have a thin and slender pittance.

BAP. It likes me well. Cambio, hie you home,  
And bid Bianca make her ready straight ;  
And, if you will, tell what hath happened,  
Lucentio's father is arrived in Padua,  
And how she's like to be Lucentio's wife.

BION. I pray the gods she may with all my heart !

TRA. Dally not with the gods, but get thee gone.

[*Exit Bion.*]

Signior Baptista, shall I lead the way ?

Welcome ! one mess is like to be your cheer : 70

Come, sir ; we will better it in Pisa.

BAP. I follow you.

[*Exeunt Tranio, Pedant, and Baptista.*]

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

BION. Cambio.

LUC. What sayest thou, Biondello ?

BION. You saw my master wink and laugh upon you ?

LUC. Biondello, what of that ?

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT IV

---

BION. Faith, nothing ; but has left me here behind, to expound the meaning or moral of his signs and tokens.

LUC. I pray thee, moralize them.

BION. Then thus. Baptista is safe, talking with the 80  
deceiving father of a deceitful son.

LUC. And what of him ?

BION. His daughter is to be brought by you to the supper.

LUC. And then ?

BION. The old priest at Saint Luke's church is at your command at all hours.

LUC. And what of all this ?

BION. I cannot tell ; expect they are busied about a counterfeit assurance : take you assurance of her, " cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum : " to the church ; take 90  
the priest, clerk, and some sufficient honest witnesses :  
If this be not that you look for, I have no more to say,  
But bid Bianca farewell for ever and a day.

LUC. Hearest thou, Biondello ?

BION. I cannot tarry : I knew a wench married in an afternoon as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit ; and so may you, sir : and so, adieu, sir. My master hath appointed me to go to Saint Luke's, to bid the priest be ready to come against you come with your appendix. [Exit.

LUC. I may, and will, if she be so contented : 100

---

89 *assurance*] See note on IV, ii, 117, *supra*.

90 *cum privilegio, etc.*] These words were usually inserted in books of which printers had secured, under letters patent, sole copyright.

## SCENE V THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

She will be pleased ; then wherefore should I doubt ?  
Hap what hap may, I'll roundly go about her :  
It shall go hard if Cambio go without her. [Exit.

### SCENE V — A PUBLIC ROAD

*Enter* PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, HORTENSIO *and* Servants

PET. Come on, i' God's name ; once more toward our  
father's.

Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon !

KATH. The moon ! the sun : it is not moonlight now.

PET. I say it is the moon that shines so bright.

KATH. I know it is the sun that shines so bright.

PET. Now, by my mother's son, and that's myself,  
It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,  
Or ere I journey to your father's house.  
Go on, and fetch our horses back again.

Evermore cross'd and cross'd ; nothing but cross'd ! 10

HOR. Say as he says, or we shall never go.

KATH. Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,  
And be it moon, or sun, or what you please :  
An if you please to call it a rush-candle,  
Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

PET. I say it is the moon.

KATH. I know it is the moon.

PET. Nay, then you lie : it is the blessed sun.

---

102 *I'll roundly . . . her*] I'll be blunt or outspoken with her. See  
note on I, ii, 57, *supra*.

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT IV

---

KATH. Then, God be bless'd, it is the blessed sun :  
But sun it is not, when you say it is not ;  
And the moon changes even as your mind. 20  
What you will have it named, even that it is ;  
And so it shall be so for Katharine.

HOR. Petruchio, go thy ways ; the field is won.

PET. Well, forward, forward ! thus the bowl should  
run,  
And not unluckily against the bias.  
But, soft ! company is coming here.

*Enter VINCENTIO*

[*To Vincentio*] Good morrow, gentle mistress : where  
away ?

Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,  
Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman ?  
Such war of white and red within her cheeks ! 30  
What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty,  
As those two eyes become that heavenly face ?  
Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee.  
Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.

---

25 *against the bias*] contrary to tendency or propensity, a technical term in the game of bowls. Cf. *Rich.* II, III, iv, 5 : "My fortune runs *against the bias*."

30 *Such . . . cheeks*] Cf. *Lucrece*, 71 : "This silent *war of lilies and of roses*."

31-32 *What stars . . . face*] Cf. *Sonnet* cxxxii, 7-9 :

"Nor that full star that ushers in the even  
Doth half that glory to the sober west,  
As those two mourning eyes become thy face."

SCENE V THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

HOR. A' will make the man mad, to make a woman of him.

KATH. Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet,

Whither away, or where is thy abode ?

Happy the parents of so fair a child ;

Happier the man, whom favourable stars

Allot thee for his lovely bed-fellow ! 40

PET. Why, how now, Kate ! I hope thou art not mad :

This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, wither'd ;

And not a maiden, as thou say'st he is.

KATH. Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes,

That have been so bedazzled with the sun,

That every thing I look on seemeth green :

Now I perceive thou art a reverend father ;

Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking.

PET. Do, good old grandsire ; and withal make known  
Which way thou travellest : if along with us, 50  
We shall be joyful of thy company.

VIN. Fair sir, and you my merry mistress,  
That with your strange encounter much amazed me,

My name is call'd Vincentio ; my dwelling Pisa ;

And bound I am to Padua ; there to visit

A son of mine, which long I have not seen.

PET. What is his name ?

VIN. Lucentio, gentle sir.

PET. Happily met ; the happier for thy son.

And now by law, as well as reverend age,

I may entitle thee my loving father : 60



The sister to my wife, this gentlewoman,  
 Thy son by this hath married. Wonder not,  
 Nor be not grieved : she is of good esteem,  
 Her dowry wealthy, and of worthy birth ;  
 Beside, so qualified as may beseem  
 The spouse of any noble gentleman.  
 Let me embrace with old Vincentio,  
 And wander we to see thy honest son,  
 Who will of thy arrival be full joyous.

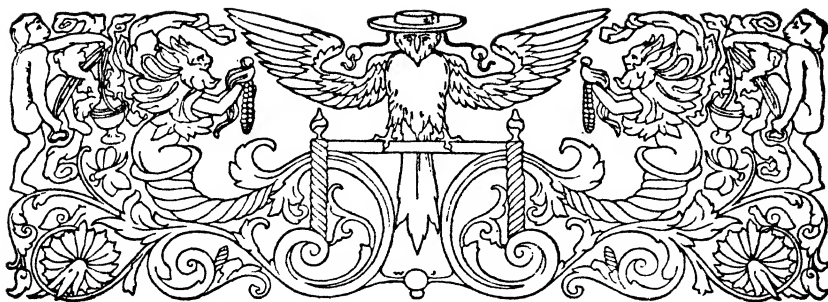
VIN. But is this true ? or is it else your pleasure,        70  
 Like pleasant travellers, to break a jest  
 Upon the company you overtake ?

HOR. I do assure thee, father, so it is.

PET. Come, go along, and see the truth hereof ;  
 For our first merriment hath made thee jealous.

*[Exeunt all but Hortensio.]*

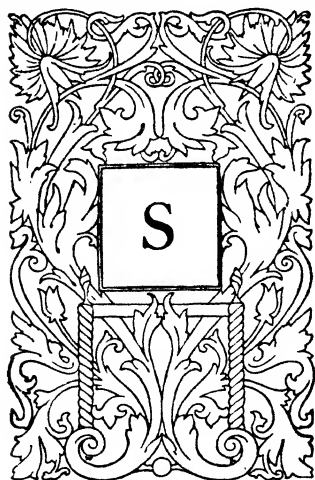
HOR. Well, Petruchio, this has put me in heart.  
 Have to my widow ! and if she be froward,  
 Then hast thou taught Hortensio to be untoward. *[Exit.]*



## ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — PADUA

### BEFORE LUCENTIO'S HOUSE

GREMIO *discovered.* *Enter behind* BIONDELLO, LUCENTIO, and BIANCA  
BIONDELLO



SOFTLY AND SWIFTLY,  
sir ; for the priest is ready.

LUC. I fly, Biondello : but  
they may chance to need thee  
at home ; therefore leave us.

BION. Nay, faith, I'll see the  
church o' your back ; and then  
come back to my master's as  
soon as I can.

[*Exeunt Lucentio, Bianca,  
and Biondello.*]

GRE. I marvel Cambio comes  
not all this while.

*Enter* PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, VINCENTIO, GRUMIO, *with*  
*Attendants*

PET. Sir, here's the door, this is Lucentio's house :  
My father's bears more toward the market-place ;  
Thither must I, and here I leave you, sir.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW    ACT V

---

VIN. You shall not choose but drink before you go : 10  
I think I shall command your welcome here,  
And, by all likelihood, some cheer is toward. [*Knocks.*]

GRE. They're busy within; you were best knock  
louder.

*Pedant looks out of the window*

PED. What's he that knocks as he would beat down  
the gate?

VIN. Is Signior Lucentio within, sir?

PED. He's within, sir, but not to be spoken withal.

VIN. What if a man bring him a hundred pound or  
two, to make merry withal?

PED. Keep your hundred pounds to yourself : he shall 20  
need none, so long as I live.

PET. Nay, I told you your son was well beloved in  
Padua. Do you hear, sir? — to leave frivolous cir-  
cumstances, — I pray you, tell Signior Lucentio, that  
his father is come from Pisa, and is here at the door to  
speak with him.

PED. Thou liest : his father has come from Padua,  
and here looking out at the window.

VIN. Art thou his father?

PED. Ay, sir; so his mother says, if I may believe  
her.

PET. [*To Vincentio*] Why, how now, gentleman! why, 30  
this is flat knavery, to take upon you another man's  
name.

PED. Lay hands on the villain : I believe a' means to  
cozen somebody in this city under my countenance.

SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

BION. I have seen them in the church together : God send 'em good shipping ! But who is here ? mine old master Vincentio ! now we are undone, and brought to nothing.

VIN. [*Seeing Biondello*] Come hither, crack-hemp.

BION. I hope I may choose, sir.

VIN. Come hither, you rogue. What, have you for- 40  
got me ?

BION. Forgot you ! no, sir : I could not forget you, for I never saw you before in all my life.

VIN. What, you notorious villain, didst thou never see thy master's father, Vincentio ?

BION. What, my old worshipful old master ? yes, marry, sir : see where he looks out of the window.

VIN. Is 't so, indeed ? [*Beats Biondello.*]

BION. Help, help, help ! here 's a madman will murder me. [*Exit. 50*]

PED. Help, son ! help, Signior Baptista !

[*Exit from above.*]

PET. Prithee, Kate, let 's stand aside, and see the end of this controversy. [*They retire.*]

*Re-enter Pedant below ; TRANIO, BAPTISTA, and Servants*

TRA. Sir, what are you, that offer to beat my servant ?

VIN. What am I, sir ! nay, what are you, sir ? O immortal gods ! O fine villain ! A silken doublet ! a

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT V

---

velvet hose! a scarlet cloak! and a copatain hat! O, I am undone! I am undone! while I play the good husband at home, my son and my servant spend all at the university.

TRA. How now! what's the matter?

60

BAP. What, is the man lunatic?

TRA. Sir, you seem a sober ancient gentleman by your habit, but your words show you a madman. Why, sir, what 'cerns it you if I wear pearl and gold? I thank my good father, I am able to maintain it.

VIN. Thy father! O villain! he is a sail-maker in Bergamo.

BAP. You mistake, sir, you mistake, sir. Pray, what do you think is his name?

VIN. His name! as if I knew not his name: I have brought him up ever since he was three years old, and his name is Tranio.

PED. Away, away, mad ass! his name is Lucentio; and he is mine only son, and heir to the lands of me, Signior Vincentio.

VIN. Lucentio! O, he hath murdered his master! Lay hold on him, I charge you, in the Duke's name. O, my son, my son! Tell me, thou villain, where is my son Lucentio?

TRA. Call forth an officer.

80

---

57 *copatain hat*] a hat with a high crown in the form of a sugar-loaf. The word "copatain" is not met in this form elsewhere. It seems a variant of "copintank" or "copentank," of unknown derivation," which is found in a like sense in 16th century English.

## SCENE I THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

*Enter one with an Officer*

CARRY this mad knave to the gaol. Father Baptista, I charge you see that he be forthcoming.

VIN. Carry me to the gaol !

GRE. Stay, officer : he shall not go to prison.

BAP. Talk not, Signior Gremio : I say he shall go to prison.

GRE. Take heed, Signior Baptista, lest you be cony-catched in this business : I dare swear this is the right Vincentio.

PED. Swear, if thou darest.

90

GRE. Nay, I dare not swear it.

TRA. Then thou wert best say that I am not Lucentio.

GRE. Yes, I know thee to be Signior Lucentio.

BAP. Away with the dotard ! to the gaol with him !

VIN. Thus strangers may be haled and abused :  
O monstrous villain !

*Re-enter BIONDELLO, with LUCENTIO and BIANCA*

BION. O, we are spoiled ! and — yonder he is : deny him, forswear him, or else we are all undone.

LUC. Pardon, sweet father. *[Kneeling.]*

VIN. Lives my sweet son ?

*[Exeunt Biondello, Tranio, and Pedant, as fast as may be.]*

BIAN. Pardon, dear father.

BAP. How hast thou offended ? 100

Where is Lucentio ?

LUC. Here 's Lucentio,

Right son to the right Vincentio ;  
That have by marriage made thy daughter mine,  
While counterfeit supposes blear'd thine eyne.

GRE. Here's packing, with a witness, to deceive us  
all !

VIN. Where is that damned villain Tranio,  
That faced and braved me in this matter so ?

BAP. Why, tell me, is not this my Cambio ?

BIAN. Cambio is changed into Lucentio.

LUC. Love wrought these miracles. Bianca's love 110  
Made me exchange my state with Tranio,  
While he did bear my countenance in the town ;  
And happily I have arrived at the last  
Unto the wished haven of my bliss.  
What Tranio did, myself enforced him to ;  
Then pardon him, sweet father, for my sake.

VIN. I'll slit the villain's nose, that would have sent  
me to the gaol.

BAP. But do you hear, sir ? have you married my  
daughter without asking my good will ? 120

VIN. Fear not, Baptista ; we will content you, go to :  
but I will in, to be revenged for this villany. [Exit.

BAP. And I, to sound the depth of this knavery. [Exit.

---

104 *counterfeit supposes*] false assumptions or suppositions. Florio in his *Italian-Engl. Dict.* interprets the Italian noun "supposito" as "a suppose or thing supposed." George Gascoigne translated Ariosto's play of *Gli Suppositi* under the name of *The Supposes*.

105 *Here's packing, with a witness*] Here's a gross piece of plotting, of a surety ; here's trickery, beyond all question.

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

LUC. Look not pale, Bianca; thy father will not frown. [*Exeunt Lucentio and Bianca.*]

GRE. My cake is dough: but I'll in among the rest;

Out of hope of all, but my share of the feast. [*Exit.*]

KATH. Husband, let's follow, to see the end of this ado.

PET. First kiss me, Kate, and we will.

KATH. What, in the midst of the street?

PET. What, art thou ashamed of me? 130

KATH. No, sir, God forbid; but ashamed to kiss.

PET. Why, then let's home again. Come, sirrah, let's away.

KATH. Nay, I will give thee a kiss: now pray thee, love, stay.

PET. Is not this well? Come, my sweet Kate: Better once than never, for never too late. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE II — PADUA

#### LUCENTIO'S HOUSE

*Enter BAPTISTA, VINCENTIO, GREMIO, the Pedant, LUCENTIO, BIANCA, PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, HORTENSIO, and Widow, TRANIO, BIONDELLO, and GRUMIO: the Serving-men with Tranio bringing in a banquet.*

LUC. At last, though long, our jarring notes agree:  
And time it is, when raging war is done,

---

125 *My cake is dough*] It's all up with me. This proverbial expression of discomfiture has already figured, I, i, 108, *supra*.





SCENE II    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

WID. Thus I conceive by him.

PET. Conceives by me! How likes Hortensio that?

HOR. My widow says, thus she conceives her tale.

PET. Very well mended. Kiss him for that, good widow.

KATH. "He that is giddy thinks the world turns round:"

I pray you, tell me what you meant by that.

WID. Your husband, being troubled with a shrew,  
Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe:

And now you know my meaning.

30

KATH. A very mean meaning.

WID. Right, I mean you.

KATH. And I am mean, indeed, respecting you.

PET. To her, Kate!

HOR. To her, widow!

PET. A hundred marks, my Kate does put her down.

HOR. That's my office.

PET. Spoke like an officer: ha' to thee, lad.

[*Drinks to Hortensio.*]

BAP. How likes Gremio these quick-witted folks?

GRE. Believe me, sir, they butt together well.

BIAN. Head, and butt! an hasty-witted body  
Would say your head and butt were head and horn.

40

VIN. Ay, mistress bride, hath that awaken'd you?

BIAN. Ay, but not frightened me; therefore I'll sleep again.

---

28 *shrem*] "shrew" here rhymes with "woe." See note on IV, i, 194, *supra*, and 188, *infra*.

PET. Nay, that you shall not : since you have begun,  
Have at you for a bitter jest or two !

BIAN. Am I your bird ? I mean to shift my bush ;  
And then pursue me as you draw your bow.  
You are welcome all. [*Exeunt Bianca, Katharina, and Widow.*]

PET. She hath prevented me. Here, Signior Tranio,  
This bird you aim'd at, though you hit her not ; 50  
Therefore a health to all that shot and miss'd.

TRA. O, sir, Lucentio slipp'd me like his greyhound,  
Which runs himself, and catches for his master.

PET. A good swift simile, but something currish.

TRA. 'T is well, sir, that you hunted for yourself :  
'T is thought your deer does hold you at a bay.

BAP. O ho, Petruchio ! Tranio hits you now.

LUC. I thank thee for that gird, good Tranio.

HOR. Confess, confess, hath he not hit you here ?

PET. A' has a little gall'd me, I confess ; 60  
And, as the jest did glance away from me,  
'T is ten to one it maim'd you two outright.

BAP. Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio,  
I think thou hast the veriest shrew of all.

PET. Well, I say no : and therefore for assurance  
Let's each one send unto his wife ;  
And he whose wife is most obedient,  
To come at first when he doth send for her,  
Shall win the wager which we will propose.

---

63 *in good sadness*] in sober earnest. The common phrase is met with  
in *All's Well*, IV, iii, 230, and twice in *Merry Wives*, III, v, 109, and  
IV, ii, 79.

SCENE II    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

HOR. Content.    What is the wager ?

LUC.    Twenty crowns. 70

PET. Twenty crowns !

I'll venture so much of my hawk or hound,  
But twenty times so much upon my wife.

LUC. A hundred then.

HOR.    Content.

PET.    A match ! 't is done.

HOR. Who shall begin ?

LUC.    That will I.

Go, Biondello, bid your mistress come to me.

BION. I go. [Exit.

BAP. Son, I'll be your half, Bianca comes.

LUC. I'll have no halves ; I'll bear it all myself.

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

How now ! what news ?

BION.    Sir, my mistress sends you word 80  
That she is busy, and she cannot come.

PET. How ! she is busy, and she cannot come !  
Is that an answer ?

GRE.    Ay, and a kind one too :  
Pray God, sir, your wife send you not a worse.

PET. I hope, better.

HOR. Sirrah Biondello, go and entreat my wife  
To come to me forthwith. [Exit Biondello.

PET.    O, ho ! entreat her !

Nay, then she must needs come.

HOR.    I am afraid, sir,  
Do what you can, yours will not be entreated.

# THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT V

---

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

Now, where's my wife?

90

BION. She says you have some goodly jest in hand:

She will not come; she bids you come to her.

PET. Worse and worse; she will not come! O vile, Intolerable, not to be endured!

Sirrah Grumio, go to your mistress;

Say, I command her come to me. *[Exit Grumio.]*

HOR. I know her answer.

PET. What?

HOR. She will not.

PET. The fouler fortune mine, and there an end.

BAP. Now, by my holidame, here comes Katharina!

*Re-enter KATHARINA*

KATH. What is your will, sir, that you send for me? 100

PET. Where is your sister, and Hortensio's wife?

KATH. They sit conferring by the parlour fire.

PET. Go, fetch them hither: if they deny to come, Swinge me them soundly forth unto their husbands: Away, I say, and bring them hither straight.

*[Exit Katharina.]*

LUC. Here is a wonder, if you talk of a wonder.

HOR. And so it is: I wonder what it bodes.

PET. Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life,

An awful rule, and right supremacy;

And, to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy? 110

SCENE II    THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

---

BAP. Now, fair befall thee, good Petruchio !  
The wager thou hast won ; and I will add  
Unto their losses twenty thousand crowns ;  
Another dowry to another daughter,  
For she is changed, as she had never been.

PET. Nay, I will win my wager better yet,  
And show more sign of her obedience,  
Her new-built virtue and obedience.  
See where she comes and brings your froward wives  
As prisoners to her womanly persuasion.

120

*Re-enter KATHARINA, with BIANCA and Widow*

Katharine, that cap of yours becomes you not :  
Off with that bauble, throw it under-foot.

WID. Lord, let me never have a cause to sigh,  
Till I be brought to such a silly pass !

BIAN. Fie, what a foolish duty call you this ?

LUC. I would your duty were as foolish too :  
The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca,  
Hath cost me an hundred crowns since supper-time.

BIAN. The more fool you, for laying on my duty.

PET. Katharine, I charge thee, tell these headstrong  
women

120

What duty they do owe their lords and husbands.

WID. Come, come, you 're mocking : we will have no  
telling.

PET. Come on, I say ; and first begin with her.

WID. She shall not.

PET. I say she shall : and first begin with her.

KATH. Fie, fie ! unknit that threatening unkind brow ;  
 And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,  
 To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor :  
 It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,  
 Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,                    140  
 And in no sense is meet or amiable.  
 A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,  
 Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty ;  
 And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty  
 Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.  
 Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,  
 Thy head, thy sovereign ; one that cares for thee,  
 And for thy maintenance commits his body  
 To painful labour both by sea and land,  
 To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,                    150  
 Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe ;  
 And craves no other tribute at thy hands  
 But love, fair looks and true obedience ;  
 Too little payment for so great a debt.  
 Such duty as the subject owes the prince  
 Even such a woman oweth to her husband ;  
 And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,  
 And not obedient to his honest will,  
 What is she but a foul contending rebel,  
 And graceless traitor to her loving lord ?                    160  
 I am ashamed that women are so simple  
 To offer war where they should kneel for peace ;  
 Or seek for rule, supremacy and sway,  
 When they are bound to serve, love and obey.  
 Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,

## SCENE II THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,  
 But that our soft conditions and our hearts  
 Should well agree with our external parts ?  
 Come, come, you froward and unable worms !  
 My mind hath been as big as one of yours, 170  
 My heart as great, my reason haply more,  
 To bandy word for word and frown for frown ;  
 But now I see our lances are but straws,  
 Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,  
 That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.  
 Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,  
 And place your hands below your husband's foot :  
 In token of which duty, if he please,  
 My hand is ready, may it do him ease.

PET. Why, there's a wench ! Come on, and kiss me,  
 Kate. 180

LUC. Well, go thy ways, old lad ; for thou shalt  
 ha't.

VIN. 'Tis a good hearing, when children are toward.

LUC. But a harsh hearing, when women are froward.

PET. Come, Kate, we'll to bed.

We three are married, but you two are sped.

'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white ;

[*To Lucentio.*]

167 *soft conditions*] gentle qualities (of mind).

176 *vail your stomachs*] abate your pride. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, I, i, 129 :  
 "The bloody Douglas . . . 'Gan vail his stomach."

*it is no boot*] there is no advantage.

185 *you two are sped*] you two are undone, done for.

186 *hit the white*] hit the bull's eye, with a play on Bianca's name,  
 which is the Italian word for "white."



THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ACT V

---

And, being a winner, God give you good night !

[*Exeunt Petruchio and Katharina.*]

HOR. Now, go thy ways ; thou hast tamed a curst shrew.

LUC. 'T is a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed  
so. [ *Exeunt.* ]

---

188 *shrew*] pronounced to rhyme with "so." Cf. note on IV, i, 194,  
and line 28, *supra*.









# **THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR**

**WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY AUSTIN DOBSON  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY W. H. MARGETSON**



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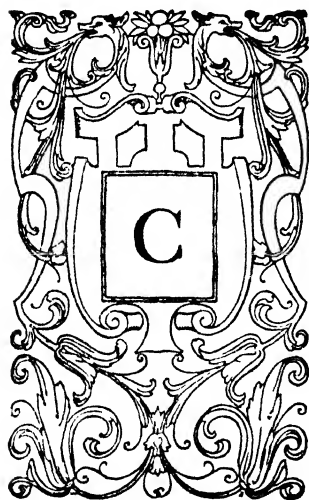
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## INTRODUCTION



CONCERNING the origin of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," there is — what there is not always in the case of Shakespeare's plays — at least one time-honoured tradition. It is said to have been written by command of Queen Elizabeth. The first mention of this tradition occurs in the "Epistle Dedicatory" of "The Comical Gallant: or the Amours of Sir John Falstaffe," a comedy produced at Drury Lane in 1702 by the clever but cross-grained old critic, John Dennis (Pope's "Appius"), who, in the occultation of Shakespeare at the opening of the eighteenth century, appears to have imagined that he could concoct from "The Merry Wives of Windsor" something better suited to the court of Queen Anne. "The Comical Gallant"

## INTRODUCTION

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had no success, and deserved none. But the "Epistle Dedicatory" contained one memorable utterance. "I knew very well," says Dennis, "that it ["The Merry Wives of Windsor"] had pleas'd one of the greatest Queens that ever was in the World . . . . This comedy [the "Merry Wives" again] was written at her Command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it Acted, that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as Tradition tells us, very well pleas'd at the Representation." Dennis again refers to the story in the Prologue:—

"But *Shakespeare's* Play in fourteen days was writ,  
And in that space to make all just and fit,  
Was an attempt surpassing human Wit.  
Yet our great *Shakespeare's* matchless Muse was such,  
None e'er in so small time perform'd so much."

As regards the last lines Dennis should have remembered that, sixty years after Shakespeare, Molière had run that "matchless Muse" very close in point of speed. The comedy of "*Les Facheux*," which was prepared for the fête given by Fouquet to Louis XIV. in 1661, was "*conçue, faite, apprise et représentée en quinze jours*." But this is by the way. The tradition to which Dennis first gave currency was promptly repeated with additions. In Rowe's "Life of Shakespeare" (Works, 1709, pp. viii-ix) he writes: "She [Queen Elizabeth] was so well pleas'd with that admirable Character of *Falstaff*, in the two Parts of "Henry the Fourth," that she commanded him to continue it for one Play more, and to

## THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

show him in Love. This is said to be the Occasion of his writing "The Merry Wives of Windsor." How well she was obey'd, the Play it self is an admirable proof." To Rowe in 1710 followed Charles Gildon, who in his "Remarks on the Plays of Shakespear," p. 291, wrote: "The *Fairys* in the fifth Act makes a Handsome complement to the Queen, in her palace of *Windsor*, who had oblig'd him [Shakespeare] to write a Play of Sir *John Falstaff* in Love, and which I am very well assured he perform'd in a Fortnight; a prodigious Thing, when all is so well contriv'd, and carry'd on without the least Confusion." It will be observed that Dennis, writing long after the event, gives no authority beyond the assertion, "I knew very well"; and it is difficult to say whether Rowe and Gildon had other information, or simply embroidered Dennis. But their combined statements have been generally accepted as evidence of a definite tradition, and, as we shall see presently, the "Merry Wives" was played before the Queen, whether written at her command or not.

With regard to the date of the composition of the "Merry Wives," we are, although still in the land of conjecture, upon somewhat surer ground. Falstaff appears in two other plays of Shakespeare,—the First and Second Parts of "Henry IV."; while in Act II., Sc. 3, of "Henry V." Mrs. Quickly narrates his death. The First Part of "Henry IV." is supposed to have been written in 1596–7, the Second Part in 1597–8, and "King Henry V." in 1599. In order to desire to see Falstaff in a new light, Queen Elizabeth must obviously

## INTRODUCTION

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have seen him already upon the stage ; and it is probable that she had made acquaintance with him either in the First Part of " Henry IV." or in the Second Part, or in both. If in both, the date of the composition of the " Merry Wives " cannot be placed earlier than 1597 ; if in the First Part only, then not later than 1596. By general agreement of the commentators, the probable date of composition has been fixed at 1599, the date assigned for the composition of " Henry V.," and it has been further supposed that it was written immediately after that play, or about Christmas. Of course it may have been written later. But the argument that Shakespeare, who, in the person of Justice Shallow, revenges himself upon his old enemy Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, would not have pursued that revenge beyond the grave, is not without its force ; and Lucy died in July, 1600. To another speculation, which would have the effect of placing the date of the composition of " The Merry Wives of Windsor " much earlier than even 1596, we need only refer historically, as it has now been practically abandoned. In the year 1592 a visit was paid to Queen Elizabeth at Windsor by a certain Duke of Wurtemberg or Count of Mömpelgard, who, or whose following, is supposed to be glanced at in the account given in the play of fraud practised on Mine Host of the Garter (Act IV., Sc. 5) by German visitors to Windsor ; and indeed, in the earlier version of the play, the name of Mömpelgard is held to be specifically indicated in the " cosen garmombles " of Sir Hugh Evans. But apart from the very obvious comment that no allusion to a royal visitor of an offensive

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nature could have been permitted in a play represented before the court, the effect of this suggestion would be to throw the composition back to a date preceding the dates of the two Parts of "Henry IV.," and so to overturn the whole fabric of the connection of the "Merry Wives" with the desire of Queen Elizabeth to see the Falstaff of those plays "in love." Whether "one of the greatest Queens that ever was in the World" was wise in throwing such a task upon the greatest of the world's dramatists may be questioned; and in any case, it depends not a little upon the exact interpretation which was attached to being "in love" in the court of "Gloriana," now nearing the end of her career.

But whether "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was written at the end of 1599 or earlier, it was certainly printed in its earliest form in 1602. In the Registers of the Stationers' Company are the following entries:—

"18 Jan., 1601-2.

"John Busby.] An Excellent and pleasant conceited Comedie of Sir John Faulstof, and the Merrie Wyves of Windesor.

"Arthur Johnson.] By assignment from John Busbye a book. An excellent and pleasant conceited comedie of Sir John Faulstafe and the merry wyves of Windsor."

The title of the play subsequently issued is as follows: "A most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Sir *John Falstaffe*, and the merrie Wiues of *Windsor*. Entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors, of Syr *Hugh*, the Welch Knight, Justice *Shallow*, and his wise Cousin M. *Slender*. With the swaggering vaine

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of Auncient *Pistoll*, and Corporall *Nym*. By William Shakespeare." Then comes the announcement: "As it hath been diuers times Acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaine's seruants. Both before her Maiestie and elsewhere. London: Printed by T. C. [i. e. Thomas Creede] for Arthur Johnson, and are to be sold at his shop in Powles Church yard, at the signe of the Flower de Leuse and the Crowne. 1602." A reprint of this quarto was issued in 1619, and a fuller version divided into Acts and Scenes was included in the folio of 1623. Of this fuller version a quarto edition was published in 1630. The exact relation of the quarto version of 1602 to the folio version of 1623 is one of the *cruces* of the commentators. Halliwell, who, in 1842, issued a reprint of the quarto for the Shakespeare Society, both regarded it and described it as a "first sketch," advancing minute arguments to that effect. On the other hand, Mr. P. A. Daniel, who printed a photo-lithographic *facsimile*, does not accept this view. He regards the folio and the quarto as imperfect copies of a common and now non-existent original, — the quarto being a note-taker's version of that original after it had been shortened for stage purposes, and the folio a fuller but still imperfect and unauthentic version of the same. The question is still *sub judice*. Mr. Howard Furness has not yet included the "Merry Wives" in his Variorum Edition; but scholars seem disposed at present to espouse the theory of Mr. Daniel. With regard to the contention that the play, as we have it, is still imperfect, may be mentioned the references (Act III., Scs. 1 and 3, and Act IV., Sc. 5)

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to some obscure retaliation by Caius and Evans upon the Host of the Garter which appears to be connected with the "cozening Germans" who steal his horses in Act IV. It is scarcely possible that such retaliation should be confined to jeering at him in his misfortune; and it may be that Pistol and Nym, who disappear early in the play (and even their old ally Bardolph, who relates the circumstances of the horse stealing), were not unconnected with it.

Unlike many of Shakespeare's works, the "Merry Wives" seems to owe but little of its plot to previous writers. Obviously time pressed; and Shakespeare was obliged on this occasion to depend more than usual upon the riches of his own imagination. Another reason which threw him upon his personal resources in this particular case would no doubt be that the scene of the play was laid at the date of representation, and his material lay about, and not behind him. But at the end of his edition of the quarto of 1602 Halliwell prints a number of tales, which may conceivably have been more or less remotely in Shakespeare's mind when he devised his incidents. One of these is contained in Ser Giovanni's "*Il Pecorone*," and of this there is an English version entitled "*The Fortunate, the Deceived, and the Unfortunate Lovers*," dated 1632. If Shakespeare used this story, he must have of course employed the original Italian or some earlier version; but the husband who figures in it is certainly befooled in the same way as Ford in the play, while the gallant not only communicates his designs to him, but is concealed by the wife in a heap of half-dry



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linen. Then there is the tale of the two lovers of Pisa, contained in Tarleton's "Newes out of Purgatorie," 1590, which is again derived from an Italian source, the "Notti" of Straparola (II., 2), where a lover is successively concealed in "a driefatte [tub] full of feathers" and other hiding places, and the husband, as before, is the lover's confidant. There are some minor touches in Tarleton's tale which suggest that Shakespeare may have had it in mind. Mrs. Quickly in one instance and Mrs. Page in another, use precisely the same expressions as Tarleton. Moreover, Mrs. Ford's enumeration (in Act IV., Sc. 2) of the various presses, coffers, chests, trunks, wells, vaults, which her jealous spouse would search, is curiously like the list of places which the equally jealous Mutio ransacks in the "Two Lovers," and supports, if it does not justify, Dr. Farmer's view that Shakespeare took Falstaff's experiences in part from Tarleton. On the other hand, it is difficult to see why Malone thought there was a connection between "The Fisher's Wife of Brainford" in "Westward for Smelts," and anything in the "Merry Wives." Its scene is laid at Windsor, for which reason he conjectured that it "probably led Shakespeare to lay the scene of Falstaff's love adventures at Windsor." Malone should have read Fielding's paper upon Shakespeare commentators. Surely the fact that the court of the "radiant Queen" mentioned in Act V. was at Windsor was probably reason enough for the choice of that place as the scene of a play written by command of her Majesty — to say nothing of the fact that Windsor appears also to have been a place (as may be seen from Tighe and

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Davis's "Annals") with which Shakespeare was specially familiar, and might naturally be expected to select for an up-to-date performance. Again, was it not at Windsor that he found that sombre and picturesque legend of "Herne the Hunter," haunting the ancient oak by Queen Elizabeth's walk upon which he had hanged himself, and so secured an unexpected immortality? Apart from its solution of the Anne Page courtship, the fairy scene in the final act is the most charming of them all — "full," says one writer, "of the aromatic wood scents of Windsor Park by night," and we should be thankful that the author of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" took the trouble to invent it himself.

From the very nature of the case, many of the characters of the play, in addition to Falstaff, are revivals of personages whom the author had already staged. Justice Shallow, with Lucy's "dozen white luces" in his coat, is our old friend from the Second Part of "Henry IV.," who discoursed so admirably of Old Double's death. "He shot a fine shoot : — John of Gaunt loved him well, and betted much money on his head." One can almost hear the weak, piping voice. He still brags of his wild "swinge buckler days," when he was called "lusty Shallow," for all that he looked, according to Falstaff, like "a man made after supper of a cheese-paring" — "a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved." "I have seen the time," he says in the "Merry Wives," "with my long sword, I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats." But he "has lived fourscore years, and upward," which makes one wonder how old

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he was when he lent Sir John the thousand pounds. From the Second Part of "Henry IV.," too, comes Ancient Pistol with his "red lattice phrases" and "cat-a-mountain looks," enriching the language with the memorable "Convey, the wise it call," and his immortal "The world's mine oyster, Which I with sword will open"; and Mrs. Quickly, not yet his wife, nor easily to be identified with the worthy Hostess of the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, whom Falstaff had once sworn to marry "upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in her Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun-week," when the prince had broken his head for liking his father to a singing man of Windsor. In the "Merry Wives" she does not even know Falstaff; she is, apparently, an unmarried woman-of-all-work to Caius, and has, so far, baffled the commentators. Bardolph, the "withered serving-man" turned tapster, with the bottle nose, and the face that was such bad security, is also in the earlier plays. Nym comes from "Henry V." alone, a circumstance which goes to confirm the conclusion that the "Merry Wives" was composed after that play; and if his "humours" be in any way connected with Ben Jonson's comedy, can hardly have come into existence until after 1596. Indeed, in 1598, Shakespeare himself acted in "Every Man in his Humour," although the part he took is not known.

Dr. Brandes is probably right in assuming that the Welch priest, Sir Hugh Evans, and the French doctor, Caius, were concessions to the mirth-making of a purist court which prided itself on its parts of speech, and must have been hugely diverted by what Mrs. Quickly calls

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the abusing, on either side, of the King's English. "Good worts! good cabbage," says Falstaff of Sir Hugh; and he flames out again even in the height of his own discomfiture. "Seese and putter! have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English?" It is possible, also, as has indeed been suggested, that Evans with his "hung, hang, hog," and the "Jenny's case" which has furnished a motto to Rossetti, is a memory of the old days of Stratford school and the *Sententiæ Pueriles*, in which case we may see in little *William* Page the earlier *William* Shakespeare. Of the remaining characters, the handsome, hearty, buxom English wives, the jovial Host, the jealous Ford, "sweet Anne Page" and her pleasant lover, Master Fenton, whom we respect too much to believe that he really companied "with the wild Prince and Poins," — there is not much to say, or rather there is not much that need be said, beyond the fact that they come straight from contemporary life, and represent, as the characters of none other of Shakespeare's comedies represent, the types their creator found about him, in the last years of the reign of Elizabeth, when, in plain prose, and a fortnight's space, he sat down to perform the difficult task which that "radiant" but arbitrary monarch had imposed upon him, of exhibiting Falstaff in love.

The "Merry Wives" bears everywhere about it the traces of its origin. Rapid, animated, full of invention and movement, it is also packed with anachronisms, minor lapses, omissions, and discrepancies, which the piety of commentators has striven hopelessly to straighten out and reconcile, without success. And the hero is like the great

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piece, — a Falstaff to order, a Falstaff of farce, a Falstaff playing a part, in whom it is scarcely possible to recognise the old ironical, cynical, resourceful, quick-witted, inimitable Falstaff of “Henry IV.” Admit that the apparent ready response of the “Merry Wives” to his addresses had so befooled him as to make him lose all his knowledge of human nature and all his native shrewdness, it is scarcely possible to imagine him blundering into the simple traps that are laid for him, without suspicion. And a Falstaff that believes in fairies is not conceivable. Indeed, he says as much himself. It was the “sudden surprise of his powers” that “drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason.” “Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it,” — he says again, — “that it wants matter to prevent such gross o’er-reaching as this?” Yet Shakespeare, placing him in a false position and a forced environment, could not entirely divest him of his former attributes. It is the old Falstaff who brags to “Master Brook” of the conquest he has never made; who consoles himself that his “admirable dexterity of wit” in counterfeiting the action of an old woman had saved him from discovery under the cudgel of Ford; it is the old Falstaff who gives that unrivalled description of his experiences in the buck-basket, “compassed, like a good bilbo in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head”; — who tells Mrs. Ford, with such a martial manliness, that “he cannot cog, and say she is this and that, like a many of those lipping hawthorn buds, that come like women in men’s apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in

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simple time” ; — who fears when the court hear how he has been transformed and cudgelled, they will melt him out of his fat, drop by drop, to liquor fishermen’s boots with, — and who has never prospered since he foreswore himself at *primero*. It is the old Falstaff with whom no one can ever be angry, and who is never angry with any one ; who will be the life and soul of the party at Page’s after the play, and will never pay that twenty pounds which he owes to “ Master Brook.”

AUSTIN DOBSON.



# THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

FENTON, a gentleman.

SHALLOW, a country justice.

SLENDER, cousin to Shallow.

FORD, }  
PAGE, } two gentlemen dwelling at Windsor.

WILLIAM PAGE, a boy, son to Page.

SIR HUGH EVANS, a Welsh parson.

DOCTOR CAIUS, a French physician.

HOST of the Garter Inn.

BARDOLPH, }  
PISTOL, } sharpers attending on Falstaff.  
NYM, }

ROBIN, page to Falstaff.

SIMPLE, servant to Slender.

RUGBY, servant to Doctor Caius.

MISTRESS FORD.

MISTRESS PAGE.

ANNE PAGE, her daughter.

MISTRESS QUICKLY, servant to Doctor Caius.

Servants to Page, Ford, etc.

SCENE — *Windsor, and the neighbourhood*

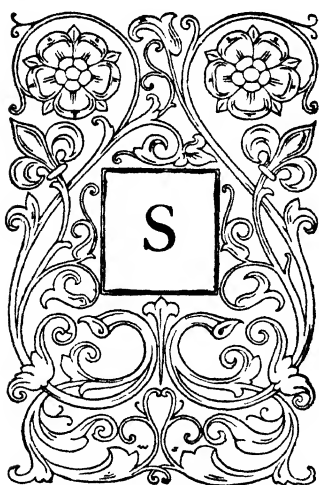
<sup>1</sup> An imperfect sketch of this play was first published in quarto in 1602, and was reissued in 1619. A complete version first appeared in the First Folio of 1623, and this was reissued in a Third Quarto in 1630. The Folio first divided the text into acts and scenes. But there is no list of "dramatis personæ." This was first supplied by Nicholas Rowe in his edition of Shakespeare's works, 1709.



ACT FIRST — SCENE I — WINDSOR  
BEFORE PAGE'S HOUSE

*Enter* JUSTICE SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SHALLOW



SIR HUGH, PERSUADE me not ; I will make a Star-chamber matter of it : if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

SLEN. In the county of Gloucester, justice of peace and "Coram."

SHAL. Ay, cousin Slender, and "Custalorum."

SLEN. Ay, and "Rato-lorum" too ; and a gentleman born, master parson ; who writes himself "Armigero," in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, "Armigero."

1 *Star-chamber matter*] Matter for the Court of Star Chamber, which had cognizance of all riots. Cf. Jonson's *Magnetic Lady*, III, 3 : "There is a court above, of the star-chamber, To punish routs and riots."

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

SHAL. Ay, that I do ; and have done any time these 10 three hundred years.

SLEN. All his successors gone before him hath done 't ; and all his ancestors that come after him may : they may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

SHAL. It is an old coat.

EVANS. The dozen white louses do become an old coat well ; it agrees well, passant ; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

SHAL. The luce is the fresh fish ; the salt fish is an old coat.

20

SLEN. I may quarter, coz.

5 "*Coram*" ] Slender here and in his next speech is confusedly recalling the official Latin titles of a justice of the peace. The word "*quorum*," which he mispronounces "*coram*," was prominent in the formal commission, which also designated a justice "*custos rotulorum*." Justice Shallow would sign his attestations "*Coram me Roberto Shallow, armigero*" (*i. e.* arms-bearer, esquire).

14 *dozen white luses*] "*Luce*" was the name commonly applied to a full-grown and ageing pike. Shallow is a caricature sketch of Sir Thomas *Lucy* of Charlecote, who is reputed to have punished Shakespeare in his youth for poaching in his park. Sir Thomas bore on his heraldic shield three *luses* hauriant argent.

16 *louses*] Sir Hugh's punning confusion of "*luce*" with "*louse*" ("*a familiar beast to man*") implies that he pronounced the two words alike.

19, 20 These lines are difficult to explain. Shallow, by way of denying Evans's suggestion of agreement between "*luses*" and "*an old coat*," points out that the pike, which lives in *fresh* water, can have no staleness about it ; such an attribute is only possible in *salted* fish (of the sea), which can therefore be alone identified with an old cast-off coat.

21 *quarter*] Like "*coat*" (l. 14) and "*passant*" (l. 17), "*quarter*" is a

SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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SHAL. You may, by marrying.

EVANS. It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

SHAL. Not a whit.

EVANS. Yes, py'r lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures: but that is all one. If Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compromises between you. 30

SHAL. The council shall hear it; it is a riot.

EVANS. It is not meet the council hear a riot; there is no fear of Got in a riot: the council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

SHAL. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

EVANS. It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it: and there is also another device in my prain, which peradventure prings goot discretions with it:— 40 there is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master Thomas Page, which is pretty virginity.

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technical term in heraldry; used as a verb, it means to fill a compartment of a shield with armorial bearings other than those of one's father—*e. g.* those of one's wife.

31 *council*] the star-chamber, which was a committee of the privy council. Cf. l. 1, *supra*.

34–35 *take . . . that*] be sure of that. “Vizaments” is a blunder for “advisevements” counsels, deliberations.

41 *Thomas Page*] This is the original reading. Elsewhere, II, i, 133 and 141, and V, v, 189, Page is called “George.” “Thomas” is probably an oversight of the author.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

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SLEN. Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

EVANS. It is that fery person for all the orld, as just as you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold and silver, is her grandsire upon his death's-bed (Got deliver to a joyful resurrections!) give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old: it were a goot motion if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master Abrah-<sup>50</sup>am and Mistress Anne Page.

SLEN. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

EVANS. Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

SLEN. I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

EVANS. Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

SHAL. Well, let us see honest Master Page. Is Falstaff there?

EVANS. Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar as <sup>60</sup> I do despise one that is false, or as I despise one that is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for Master Page. [*Knocks*] What, hoa! Got pless your house here!

PAGE. [*Within*] Who's there?

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<sup>44</sup> *speaks small*] speaks in a low voice. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, ii, 43.

<sup>50</sup> *pribbles and prabbles*] The Welshman's mispronunciation of bribble-brabble, a common reduplicated form of "brabble," discordant babble, vain chatter. Cf. *infra*, IV, i, 45, and V, v, 153.

## SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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*Enter PAGE*

EVANS. Here is Got's plessing, and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here young Master Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

PAGE. I am glad to see your worships well. I thank 70 you for my venison, Master Shallow.

SHAL. Master Page, I am glad to see you: much good do it your good heart! I wished your venison better; it was ill killed. How doth good Mistress Page?—and I thank you always with my heart, la! with my heart.

PAGE. Sir, I thank you.

SHAL. Sir, I thank you; by yea and no, I do.

PAGE. I am glad to see you, good Master Slender.

SLEN. How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on Cotsall. 80

PAGE. It could not be judged, sir.

SLEN. You'll not confess, you'll not confess.

SHAL. That he will not. 'Tis your fault; 't is your fault; 't is a good dog.

PAGE. A cur, sir.

SHAL. Sir, he's a good dog, and a fair dog: can there be more said? he is good and fair. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

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80 *Cotsall*] The local pronunciation of Cotswold. On the Cotswold hills, in Gloucestershire, coursing matches and meetings for rural sports were frequently held. The district was within easy distance of Stratford-on-Avon. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV.* III, ii, 20: "Will Squele, a *Cotswold* man."

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

PAGE. Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

EVANS. It is spoke as a Christians ought to speak. 90

SHAL. He hath wronged me, Master Page.

PAGE. Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

SHAL. If it be confessed, it is not redressed: is not that so, Master Page? He hath wronged me; indeed he hath; at a word, he hath, believe me: Robert Shallow, esquire, saith, he is wronged.

PAGE. Here comes Sir John.

*Enter SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, NYM, and PISTOL*

FAL. Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the king?

SHAL. Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge. 101

FAL. But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

SHAL. 'Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

FAL. I will answer it straight; I have done all this. That is now answered.

SHAL. The council shall know this.

FAL. 'T were better for you if it were known in counsel: you'll be laughed at.

EVANS. *Pauca verba*, Sir John; goot worts.

FAL. Goot worts! good cabbage. Slender, I broke your head: what matter have you against me? 111

SLEN. Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against

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107-108 *known in counsel*] kept secret.

110 *worts*] vegetables, of which the "cole-wort" or cabbage is one of the commonest species.

# SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

you ; and against your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.

BARD. You Banbury cheese !

SLEN. Ay, it is no matter.

PIST. How now, Mephostophilus !

SLEN. Ay, it is no matter.

NYM. Slice, I say ! pauca, pauca : slice ! that 's my humour. 120

SLEN. Where 's Simple, my man ? Can you tell, cousin ?

EVANS. Peace, I pray you. Now let us understand. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand ; that is, Master Page, fidelicet Master Page ; and there is myself, fidelicet myself ; and the three party is, lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter.

PAGE. We three, to hear it and end it between them.

EVANS. Fery goot : I will make a prief of it in my note-book ; and we will afterwards ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can. 131

FAL. Pistol !

PIST. He hears with ears.

115 *Banbury cheese*] flat, thin cheese. Cf. *Jacke Drum's Entertainment*, Act III, in Simpson's *School of Shakspeare*, II, 173 : " You are like a *Banbury cheese*, Nothing but paring."

117 *Mephostophilus*] A probable reference to Marlowe's tragedy of *Dr. Faustus*. Cf. IV, v, 64, *infra*, " Three Doctor *Faustuses*."

119 *Slice . . . pauca*] Nym echoes Evans' exclamation " pauca verba " of l. 109, *supra*. " Slice " is a characteristic allusion to the sword, and resembles Nym's hint in *Hen. V*, II, i, 22 : " Some say knives have edges."



# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

EVANS. The tevil and his tam ! what phrase is this,  
 " He hears with ear " ? why, it is affectations.

FAL. Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse ?

SLEN. Ay, by these gloves, did he, or I would I might  
 never come in mine own great chamber again else, of  
 seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovel-  
 boards, that cost me two shilling and two pence a-piece  
 of Yead Miller, by these gloves. 141

FAL. Is this true, Pistol ?

EVANS. No ; it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

PIST. Ha, thou mountain-foreigner ! Sir John and  
 master mine,  
 I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.

Word of denial in thy labras here !

Word of denial : froth and scum, thou liest !

SLEN. By these gloves, then, 't was he. 149

NYM. Be avised, sir, and pass good humours : I will

139-140 *seven groats . . . a-piece*] groats, *i. e.* four-penny pieces, were  
 coins of very old standing ; milled or stamped sixpences were  
 first coined in 1561. " Edward shovel-boards," which are called  
 " shove-groat shillings " in *2 Hen. IV.*, II, iv, 182, were broad and  
 heavy shilling-pieces of Edward VI's reign, and came to be used  
 as counters or discs in the popular game of shovel-board, which in  
 principle resembles the more modern game of "squayles." Slender's  
 words indicate that the value of Edward VI's shillings had greatly  
 appreciated ; but his figures are not to be depended on. Seven  
 groats (of four-pence each) could not be converted into sixpence's.

141 *Yead*] A colloquial form of Ned.

146 *latten bilbo*] Slender is compared to a sword blade ; cf. III, v, 98, *infra*.

147 *labras*] Pistol bombastically uses the Spanish word for lips.

150-151 *I will say "marry trap"*] I will catch you (cry quits with you),  
 if you play the "nuthook" (*i. e.* constable or catchpole) with me.

# SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

say "marry trap" with you, if you run the nuthook's humour on me ; that is the very note of it.

SLEN. By this hat, then, he in the red face had it ; for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

FAL. What say you, Scarlet and John ?

BARD. Why, sir, for my part, I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.

EVANS. It is his five senses : fie, what the ignorance is !

BARD. And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashiered ; and so conclusions passed the careires. 161

SLEN. Ay, you spake in Latin then too ; but 't is no matter : I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick : if I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

EVANS. So Got udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

FAL. You hear all these matters denied, gentlemen ; you hear it.

*Enter ANNE PAGE, with wine ; MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE, following*

PAGE. Nay, daughter, carry the wine in ; we'll drink within. [Exit Anne Page. 171

156 *Scarlet and John*] The names of two followers of Robin Hood. "Scarlet" alludes to Bardolph's red face.

160 *fap*] drunken ; probably from "vappa," a drunken person.

161 *passed the careires*] galloped on at full speed ; a technical term of the equestrian menage, or art of riding. Cf. *Hen. V*, II, i, 123.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

SLEN. O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page.

PAGE. How now, Mistress Ford!

FAL. Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met: by your leave, good mistress. [*Kisses her.*]

PAGE. Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome. Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner: come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness.

[*Exeunt all except Shal., Slen., and Evans.*]

SLEN. I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here.

180

*Enter SIMPLE*

How now, Simple! where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? You have not the Book of Riddles about you, have you?

SIM. Book of Riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake upon All-hallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

---

180 *Book of Songs and Sonnets*] Slender seeks amatory verse wherewith to court Anne Page. The book he specifies is probably the popular poetic miscellany, generally called *Tottel's Miscellany*, but really entitled *Songes and Sonnettes*, 1557. An eighth edition appeared in 1587.

182 *Book of Riddles*] *The Booke of Mery Riddles* was very popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, though no edition earlier than that of 1600 seems to be extant.

185-186 *All-hallowmas last . . . Michaelmas*] Slender seems to confuse Michaelmas (29 September) with Martlemas or Martinmas (11 November). All-hallowmas (All Saints, 1 November) comes some five weeks after Michaelmas, but ten days "afore" Martlemas.

SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

SHAL. Come, coz ; come, coz ; we stay for you. A word with you, coz ; marry, this, coz : there is, as 't were, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me ? 190

SLEN. Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable ; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

SHAL. Nay, but understand me.

SLEN. So I do, sir.

EVANS. Give ear to his motions, Master Slender : I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

SLEN. Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says : I pray you, pardon me ; he's a justice of peace in his country, simple though I stand here.

EVANS. But that is not the question : the question is concerning your marriage. 201

SHAL. Ay, there's the point, sir.

EVANS. Marry, is it ; the very point of it ; to Mistress Anne Page.

SLEN. Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

EVANS. But can you affection the 'oman ? Let us command to know that of your mouth or of your lips ; for divers philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth. Therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid ? 211

SHAL. Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her ?

SLEN. I hope, sir, I will do as it shall become one that would do reason.

EVANS. Nay, Got's lords and his ladies ! you must

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

speak possitable, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

SHAL. That you must. Will you, upon good dowry, marry her ?

SLEN. I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason. 221

SHAL. Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz : what I do is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid ?

SLEN. I will marry her, sir, at your request : but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another ; I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt : but if you say, "Marry her," I will marry her ; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

EVANS. It is a fery discretion answer ; save the fall is in the ort "dissolutely : " the ort is, according to our meaning, "resolutely : " his meaning is good. 232

SHAL. Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

SLEN. Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la !

SHAL. Here comes fair Mistress Anne.

*Re-enter ANNE PAGE*

Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne !

ANNE. The dinner is on the table ; my father desires your worships' company.

---

230-231 *fall . . . ort*] Fall is a mispronunciation of "fault," as "ort" is of "word."

SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

SHAL. I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne.

EVANS. Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace. [*Exeunt Shallow and Evans.* 241

ANNE. Will 't please your worship to come in, sir?

SLEN. No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

ANNE. The dinner attends you, sir.

SLEN. I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin Shallow. [*Exit Simple.*] A justice of peace sometime may be beholding to his friend for a man. I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead: but what though? yet I live like a poor gentleman born. 251

ANNE. I may not go in without your worship: they will not sit till you come.

SLEN. I' faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as though I did.

ANNE. I pray you, sir, walk in.

SLEN. I had rather walk here, I thank you. I bruised my shin th' other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; three veneys for a dish of stewed prunes; and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? be there bears i' the town? 262

ANNE. I think there are, sir; I heard them talked of.

---

259-260] *three veneys . . . prunes*] The wager for which the fencing-match was played was a dish of stewed prunes to be paid to him who scored three "veneys" (*i. e.* hits). Florio in his *Italian-English Dictionary* (*s. v.*, "Tocco, a touch") explains "a *venie* at fence" to be "a hit."

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

SLEN. I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

ANNE. Ay, indeed, sir.

SLEN. That's meat and drink to me, now. I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain; but, I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it passed: but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favoured rough things.

272

*Re-enter PAGE*

PAGE. Come, gentle Master Slender, come; we stay for you.

SLEN. I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

PAGE. By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir! come, come.

SLEN. Nay, pray you, lead the way.

PAGE. Come on, sir.

SLEN. Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

280

ANNE. Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

SLEN. Truly, I will not go first; truly, la! I will not do you that wrong.

---

268 *meat and drink*] a common proverbial phrase, expressing infinite satisfaction. Cf. *As you like it*, V, i, 10: "It is *meat and drink* to me to see a clown."

269 *Sackerson*] The name of a far-famed performing bear, which was a chief attraction, at the date of the performance of this play, at the Paris Garden in Southwark. Sir John Davies in No. xliii of his *Epigrams* (published about 1596) describes a law-student forsaking his law-books "to see . . . *Sacarson*."

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

ANNE. I pray you, sir.

SLEN. I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome.  
You do yourself wrong, indeed, la! [Exeunt.]

#### SCENE II—THE SAME

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE*

EVANS. Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which is the way : and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

SIM. Well, sir.

EVANS. Nay, it is petter yet. Give her this letter ; for it is a 'oman that altogether's acquaintance with Mistress Anne Page : and the letter is, to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to Mistress Anne Page. I pray you, be gone : I will make an end <sup>10</sup> of my dinner ; there's pippins and cheese to come.

[Exeunt.]

#### SCENE III—A ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter FALSTAFF, Host, BARDOLPH, NYM, PISTOL, and ROBIN*

FAL. Mine host of the Garter !

HOST. What says my bully-rook ? speak scholarly and wisely.

---

<sup>7</sup> *that altogether's acquaintance*] that is fully acquainted with.



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

FAL. Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

HOST. Discard, bully Hercules; cashier: let them wag; trot, trot.

FAL. I sit at ten pounds a week.

HOST. Thou'rt an emperor, Cæsar, Keisar, and Phee-zar. I will entertain Bardolph; he shall draw, he shall 10 tap: said I well, bully Hector?

FAL. Do so, good mine host.

HOST. I have spoke; let him follow. [*To Bard.*] Let me see thee froth and lime: I am at a word; follow.

[*Exit.*]

FAL. Bardolph, follow him. A tapster is a good trade: an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a withered serving-man a fresh tapster. Go; adieu.

BARD. It is a life that I have desired: I will thrive.

PIST. O base Hungarian wight! wilt thou the spigot wield? [*Exit Bardolph.* 20]

---

14 *froth and lime*] The host invites Bardolph to try his hand as a tapster, whose function it was to make the beer "froth and lime," i. e. sparkle by covertly introducing *lime* into the glass. Cf. 1 *Hen. IV*, II, iv, 117, "Here's *lime* in this sack," and 119, "a cup of sack with *lime* in it." *At a word*, used adverbially, ordinarily means "in fine," "to sum up," "in short." Here the sense seems to be, "I am as good as my word."

19 *Hungarian*] The earlier Quartos read *Gongarian*. Steevens quoted without reference a line from an unidentified old play, "O base *Gongarian*! wilt thou the distaff wield?" But the epithet "*Hungarian*" was often used in the sense of "swaggering" or "bombastic."

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

NYM. He was gotten in drink : is not the humour conceived ?

FAL. I am glad I am so acquit of this tinder-box : his thefts were too open ; his filching was like an unskilful singer ; he kept not time.

NYM. The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest.

PIST. "Convey," the wise it call. "Steal !" foh ! a fico for the phrase !

FAL. Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

PIST. Why, then, let kibes ensue. 30

FAL. There is no remedy ; I must cony-catch ; I must shift.

PIST. Young ravens must have food.

FAL. Which of you know Ford of this town ?

PIST. I ken the wight : he is of substance good.

FAL. My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

PIST. Two yards, and more.

FAL. No quips now, Pistol ! Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about ; but I am now about no waste ; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to 40  
Ford's wife : I spy entertainment in her ; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation : I can construe the action of her familiar style ; and the hardest

---

26 *at a minute's rest*] This, the original reading, has been ingeniously altered by many editors to *at a minim's rest*. "Minim" is the shortest note in music. "At a minim's rest" would mean "with the utmost rapidity." The emendation is supported by *Rom. and Jul.* II, iv, 22 : "He rests me his *minim rest*," in Mercutio's description of Tybalt's method of fight.

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

voice of her behaviour, to be Englished rightly, is, "I am Sir John Falstaff's."

PIST. He hath studied her will, and translated her will, out of honesty into English.

NYM. The anchor is deep : will that humour pass ?

FAL. Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her husband's purse : he hath a legion of angels. 50

PIST. As many devils entertain ; and " 'To her, boy," say I.

NYM. The humour rises ; it is good : humour me the angels.

FAL. I have writ me here a letter to her : and here another to Page's wife, who even now gave me good eyes too, examined my parts with most judicious œillades ; sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly.

PIST. Then did the sun on dunghill shine. 60

NYM. I thank thee for that humour.

FAL. O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass ! Here's another letter to her : she bears the purse too ; she is a region

46-47 *will . . . will*] This is the reading of the First Folio. The earlier Quartos read *well* for the first *will* and omit the second phrase. *Will* in both cases is doubtless right.

57 *œillades*] A French word meaning "amorous glances," very occasionally met with in Elizabethan literature.

65-66 *a region in Guiana*] An allusion to Sir Walter Raleigh's recent exploration of Guiana, of which he published an account in 1595.

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheaters to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go bear thou this letter to Mistress Page; and thou this to Mistress Ford: we will thrive, lads, we 70 will thrive.

PIST. Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,  
And by my side wear steel? then, Lucifer take all!

NYM. I will run no base humour: here, take the humour-letter: I will keep the haviour of reputation.

FAL. [*To Robin*] Hold, sirrah, bear you these letters tightly;

Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.

Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go;

Trudge, plod away o' the hoof; seek shelter, pack!

F'alstaff will learn the humour of the age,

80

French thrift, you rogues; myself and skirted page.

[*Exeunt Falstaff and Robin.*]

PIST. Let vultures gripe thy guts! for gourd and  
fullam holds,

And high and low beguiles the rich and poor:

Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,

Base Phrygian Turk!

NYM. I have operations which be humours of revenge.

PIST. Wilt thou revenge?

---

66 *cheaters*] A punning quibble on "cheaters" and "escheaters," officers of the Exchequer.

82-83 *gourd . . . low*] "Gourd," "fullam," "high [men]" and "low [men]" were all cant terms for loaded dice in common use by sharpers.

NYM. By welkin and her star !

PIST. With wit or steel ?

NYM. With both the humours, I :

90

I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

PIST. And I to Ford shall eke unfold

How Falstaff, varlet vile,

His dove will prove, his gold will hold,

And his soft couch defile.

NYM. My humour shall not cool : I will incense Page to deal with poison ; I will possess him with yellowness, for the revolt of mine is dangerous : that is my true humour.

PIST. Thou art the Mars of malecontents : I second thee ; troop on.

[*Exeunt.* 100

#### SCENE IV — A ROOM IN DOCTOR CAIUS'S HOUSE

*Enter* MISTRESS QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY

QUICK. What, John Rugby ! I pray thee, go to the casement, and see if you can see my master, Master Doctor Caius, coming. If he do, i' faith, and find any

---

97 *yellowness*] the traditional colour of jealousy.

98 *revolt of mine*] This is the original reading. Theobald suggested *revolt of mien* (*i. e.* change of complexion), which does not add much point to Nym's threat. The Cambridge editors suggest that "anger" is omitted after "mine." Most probably Nym merely means to say in his grandiloquent jargon "my revolt," *i. e.* "my purpose of renouncing allegiance to Falstaff."

## SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

body in the house, here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the king's English.

RUG. I'll go watch.

QUICK. Go; and we'll have a posset for 't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire. [*Exit Rugby.*] An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal; and, I warrant you, no tell-tale 10 nor no breed-bate: his worst fault is, that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way: but nobody but has his fault; but let that pass. Peter Simple, you say your name is?

SIM. Ay, for fault of a better.

QUICK. And Master Slender's your master?

SIM. Ay, forsooth.

QUICK. Does he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring-knife?

SIM. No, forsooth: he hath but a little wee face, with 20 a little yellow beard, — a Cain-coloured beard.

QUICK. A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

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20 *wee face*] This is the original reading. Capell needlessly substituted *wehy-face* (meaning "pale-faced"), as in *Macb.*, V, iii, 17. In the Second Quarto (in the preceding speech, which the Folio alters), Dame Quickly applies to Slender's beard the epithet "whay coloured," but *wee* is quite appropriate to the context.

21 *Cain-coloured*] The early Quartos read "*Kane* colored," which tends to justify the popular emendation "*Cane-coloured*" for the First Folio reading "*Caine-colored*." "*Cane-coloured beard*" would be much the same as "*straw-colour beard*" in *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, ii, 82. If "*Cain-coloured*" be retained, there would be a reference to the red colour of Cain's beard in current pictorial illustrations of Scriptural history.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

SIM. Ay, forsooth : but he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between this and his head ; he hath fought with a warrener.

QUICK. How say you ? — O, I should remember him : does he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait ?

SIM. Yes, indeed, does he.

QUICK. Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune ! Tell Master Parson Evans I will do what I can <sup>30</sup> for your master : Anne is a good girl, and I wish —

*Re-enter RUGBY*

RUG. Out, alas ! here comes my master.

QUICK. We shall all be shent. Run in here, good young man ; go into this closet : he will not stay long. [*Shuts Simple in the closet.*] What, John Rugby ! John ! what, John, I say ! Go, John, go inquire for my master ; I doubt he be not well, that he comes not home.

[*Singing*] And down, down, adown-a, &c.

*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS*

CAIUS. Vat is you sing ? I do not like des toys. Pray you, go and vetch me in my closet un boitier vert, — a <sup>40</sup> box, a green-a box : do intend vat I speak ? a green-a box.

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<sup>23</sup> as tall a man of his hands] In Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, "manesco" is interpreted as "readie or nimble-handed ; a tall man of his hands."

SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

QUICK. Ay, forsooth; I'll fetch it you. [*Aside*] I am glad he went not in himself: if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.

CAIUS. Fe, fe, fe, fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais à la cour, — la grande affaire.

QUICK. Is it this, sir?

CAIUS. Oui; mette le au mon pocket: dépêcne, quickly. Vere is dat knave Rugby?

QUICK. What, John Rugby! John!

50

RUG. Here, Sir!

CAIUS. You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby. Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.

RUG. 'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

CAIUS. By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me! Qu'ai-j'oublié! dere is some simples in my closet, dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

QUICK. Ay me, he'll find the young man there, and be mad!

60

CAIUS. O diable, diable! vat is in my closet? Villain! larron! [*Pulling Simple out.*] Rugby, my rapier!

QUICK. Good master, be content.

CAIUS. Wherefore shall I be content-a?

QUICK. The young man is an honest man.

CAIUS. What shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

QUICK. I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic. Here the truth of it: he came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

CAIUS. Vell.

70



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

SIM. Ay, forsooth; to desire her to —

QUICK. Peace, I pray you.

CAIUS. Peace-a your tongue. Speak-a your tale.

SIM. To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to Mistress Anne Page for my master in the way of marriage.

QUICK. This is all, indeed, la! but I'll ne'er put my finger in the fire, and need not.

CAIUS. Sir Hugh send-a you? Rugby, baille me some paper. Tarry you a little-a while. [*Writes.* 80

QUICK. [*Aside to Simple*] I am glad he is so quiet: if he had been throughly moved, you should have heard him so loud and so melancholy. But notwithstanding, man, I'll do you your master what good I can: and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master, — I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself, —

SIM. [*Aside to Quickly*] 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand. 90

QUICK. [*Aside to Simple*] Are you avised o' that? you shall find it a great charge: and to be up early and down late; — but notwithstanding, — to tell you in your ear; I would have no words of it, — my master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page: but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind, — that's neither here nor there.

CAIUS. You jack'nape, give-a this letter to Sir Hugh;

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79 *baille*] French for "give, deliver."

## SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

by gar, it is a shallenge : I will cut his troat in de park ; and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone ; it is not good you tarry here. — By gar, I will cut all his two stohes ; by gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog. [*Exit Simple.* 102]

QUICK. Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

CAIUS. It is no matter-a ver dat : — do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself ? — By gar, I vill kill de Jack priest ; and I have appointed mine host of de Jarteer to measure our weapon. — By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

QUICK. Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well. We must give folks leave to prate : what, the good-jer !

CAIUS. Rugby, come to the court with me. By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door. Follow my heels, Rugby. 113

[*Exeunt Caius and Rugby.*]

QUICK. You shall have An fool's-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that : never a woman in

---

110 *what, the good-jer!*] a common expletive expressive of surprise ; “in the name of fortune !” A contemporary Dutch expression (*Wat goedtjaar*), almost identical in form, was commonly rendered in French translation by the phrase “*Que bon heur est cela ?*” This seems to prove that the English words present elliptically some such phrase as “What good fortune, or advantage, comes of that ?” Sir Thomas Hanmer's suggestion that “good year” is a corruption of an imaginary French word “*goujeres*,” a venereal disease, may safely be rejected.

114 *fool's-head . . . own*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, i, 106 : “You see an ass-head of your own” (you make a fool of yourself). “An” can only stand here for the article “a” ; it perhaps indicates

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT I

---

Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do ; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

FENT. [*Within*] Who 's within there ? ho !

QUICK. Who 's there, I trow ? Come near the house, I pray you. 120

*Enter FENTON*

FENT. How now, good woman ! how dost thou ?

QUICK. The better that it pleases your good worship to ask.

FENT. What news ? how does pretty Mistress Anne ?

QUICK. In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle ; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way ; I praise heaven for it.

FENT. Shall I do any good, think'st thou ? shall I not lose my suit ? 129

QUICK. Troth, sir, all is in his hands above : but notwithstanding, Master Fenton, I 'll be sworn on a book, she loves you. Have not your worship a wart above your eye ?

FENT. Yes, marry, have I ; what of that ?

QUICK. Well, thereby hangs a tale :—good faith, it is such another Nan ; but, I detest, an honest maid as ever broke bread :—we had an hour's talk of that wart. —I shall never laugh but in that maid's company !—But, indeed, she is given too much to allicholy and musing : but for you — well, go to. 139

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that Shakespeare first wrote "ass-head," which he altered to "fool's-head" on second thoughts.

SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

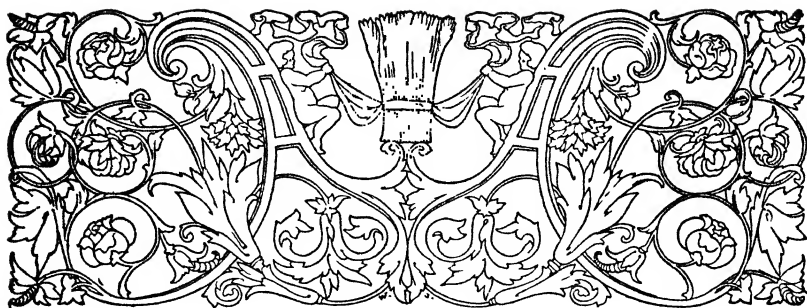
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FENT. Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf: if thou seest her before me, commend me.

QUICK. Will I? i' faith, that we will; and I will tell your worship more of the wart the next time we have confidence; and of other wooers.

FENT. Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

QUICK. Farewell to your worship. [*Exit Fenton*] Truly, an honest gentleman: but Anne loves him not; for I know Anne's mind as well as another does.-- Out upon't! what have I forgot? [*Exit.* 150



## ACT SECOND — SCENE I

### BEFORE PAGE'S HOUSE

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter*

MISTRESS PAGE



HAT, HAVE I SCAPED  
love-letters in the holiday-time  
of my beauty, and am I now a  
subject for them? Let me see.

*[Reads.*

“Ask me no reason why I love you;  
for though Love use Reason for his  
physician, he admits him not for his  
counsellor. You are not young, no  
more am I; go to, then, there's sym-  
pathy: you are merry, so am I; ha,  
ha! then there's more sympathy: you  
love sack, and so do I; would you de-  
sire better sympathy? Let it suffice

thee, Mistress Page, — at the least, if the love of soldier can  
suffice, — that I love thee. I will not say, pity me, — 't is not a  
soldier-like phrase; but I say, love me. By me,

10

## SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

Thine own true knight,  
By day or night,  
Or any kind of light,  
With all his might  
For thee to fight,                    JOHN FALSTAFF."

What a Herod of Jewry is this! O wicked, wicked world! One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age to show himself a young gallant! What an unweighed behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard picked—with the devil's name!—out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not<sup>20</sup> been thrice in my company! What should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth: Heaven forgive me! Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men. How shall I be revenged on him? for revenged I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

*Enter MISTRESS FORD*

MRS FORD. Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

MRS PAGE. And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.<sup>30</sup>

MRS FORD. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

MRS PAGE. Faith, but you do, in my mind.

MRS FORD. Well, I do, then; yet, I say, I could show you to the contrary. O Mistress Page, give me some counsel!

MRS PAGE. What's the matter, woman?

MRS FORD. O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour!

MRS PAGE. Hang the trifle, woman! take the honour. 40  
What is it? — dispense with trifles; — what is it?

MRS FORD. If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment or so, I could be knighted.

MRS PAGE. What? thou liest! Sir Alice Ford!  
These knights will hack; and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry.

MRS FORD. We burn daylight: — here, read, read; perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking: and yet he would not swear; 50  
praised women's modesty; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I would

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45 *hack*] commonly explained in the unsupported sense of "grow hackneyed," "pall," "get too common," with a reference to James I's indiscriminate creation of knights (at a date later than the first draft of the play). There seems no point in the suggestion that "hack" is used here in its ordinary sense of "mutilate," "cut off," in allusion to the ceremonial degradation of unworthy knights by cutting off their spurs, the special emblem of chivalry. "Hack" undoubtedly appears in its ordinary sense of "mutilate," *infra*, III, i, 71, but in a later scene it recurs in quite a different and apparently a ribald sense in IV, i, 60, where Mrs. Quickly says a boy is taught by his master "to *hick* and to *hack*, which they'll do fast enough of themselves, and to call 'horum' (*i. e.* whore)." "Hack" or "hackney" was a slang name for a loose woman, and hence a verb meaning "to have dealings with loose women" is deducible. It is possible that Mrs. Page here intends some such quibbling allusion.

47 *We burn daylight*] Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iv, 43: "We waste our lights in vain like *lamps by day*."

## SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words ; but they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of " Green Sleeves." What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor ? How shall I be revenged on him ? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like ?

60

MRS PAGE. Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs ! To thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter : but let thine inherit first ; for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names, — sure, more, — and these are of the second edition : he will print them, out of doubt ; for he cares not what he puts into the press, when he would put us two. I had rather be a giantess, and lie under Mount Pelion. Well, I will find you twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man.

70

MRS FORD. Why, this is the very same ; the very hand, the very words. What doth he think of us ?

MRS. PAGE. Nay, I know not : it makes me almost

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55 *the tune of " Green Sleeves "*] One of the most popular ballads of Shakespeare's day, to which reference is made again, V, v, 18, *infra* ; it was licensed for print in 1580, but no copy of the original words survives, although the tune is extant. " A new courtly sonet of the Lady Greensleeves to the new *tune of Greensleeves*," one of many imitations of the original verses, figures in Robin-son's *Handfull of Pleasant Delights*, 1584 (ed. Arber, p. 17).



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

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ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he know some strain in me, that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

MRS FORD. "Boarding," call you it? I'll be sure to keep him above deck.

80

MRS PAGE. So will I: if he come under my hatches, I'll never to sea again. Let's be revenged on him: let's appoint him a meeting; give him a show of comfort in his suit, and lead him on with a fine-baited delay, till he hath pawned his horses to mine host of the Garter.

MRS FORD. Nay, I will consent to act any villany against him, that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

MRS PAGE. Why, look where he comes; and my good man too: he's as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause; and that, I hope, is an unmeasurable distance.

MRS FORD. You are the happier woman.

MRS PAGE. Let's consult together against this greasy knight. Come hither.

[*They retire.*]

*Enter FORD, with PISTOL, and PAGE, with NYM*

FORD. Well, I hope it be not so.

PIST. Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs:  
Sir John affects thy wife.

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77 *some strain*] some natural disposition (to sensuality). Mrs. Page employs the word in the identical sense, III, iii, 163, *infra*: "I would all of the same *strain* were in the same distress."

# SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

FORD. Why, sir, my wife is not young. 100

PIST. He wooes both high and low, both rich and poor,  
Both young and old, one with another, Ford ;  
He loves the gallimaufry : Ford, perpend.

FORD. Love my wife !

PIST. With liver burning hot. Prevent, or go thou,  
Like Sir Actæon he, with Ringwood at thy heels :  
O, odious is the name !

FORD. What name, sir ?

PIST. The horn, I say. Farewell. 109

Take heed ; have open eye ; for thieves do foot by night :  
Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo-birds do sing.  
Away, Sir Corporal Nym !—

Believe it, Page ; he speaks sense. [Exit.

FORD. [Aside] I will be patient ; I will find out this.

NYM. [To Page] And this is true : I like not the humour of lying. He hath wronged me in some humours :

103 *gallimaufry*] This word, which is from the French, properly means “a stew or hash” of mixed meats. Pistol applies it to a promiscuous assembly of persons.

106 *Sir Actæon . . . Ringwood*] The story of Actæon, an ardent hunter, who for defying Diana, goddess of the chase, was turned by her into a stag, is told by Ovid, *Met.*, III, 138, *seq.* Ovid gives the names of Actæon’s hounds, the last being called “Hylactor.” Golding, in his translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, renders the name “Hylactor” by “*Ringwood*.” This is clear proof of Shakespeare’s indebtedness to Golding in this passage. Actæon’s transformation to a horned stag is noticed below, III, ii, 35 : “a secure and wilful *Actæon*.” The story is told more directly in *Tw. And.*, II, iii, 61–65, 70–71. Figurative use is made of Actæon’s fate in *Tw. Night*, I, i, 22.

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

I should have borne the humoured letter to her ; but I have a sword, and it shall bite upon my necessity. He loves your wife ; there 's the short and the long. My name is Corporal Nym ; I speak, and I avouch ; 't is true : my name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife. Adieu. I love not the humour of bread and cheese ; and there 's the humour of it. Adieu. [Exit. 123

PAGE. "The humour of it," quoth 'a ! here 's a fellow frights English out of his wits.

FORD. I will seek out Falstaff.

PAGE. I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

FORD. If I do find it : — well.

PAGE. I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest o' the town commended him for a true man. 130

FORD. 'T was a good sensible fellow : — well.

PAGE. How now, Meg !

*[Mrs Page and Mrs Ford come forward.]*

MRS PAGE. Whither go you, George ? Hark you.

MRS FORD. How now, sweet Frank ! why art thou melancholy ?

FORD. I melancholy ! I am not melancholy. Get you home, go.

MRS FORD. Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head. Now, will you go, Mistress Page ? 139

MRS PAGE. Have with you. You 'll come to dinner, George ? *[Aside to Mrs Ford]* Look who comes yonder : she shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.

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129 *Cataian*] Literally, a native of Cathay or China, but often used for "thief" or "sharper." Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, iii, 73 : "My lady's a *Cataian*."

SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS FORD. [*Aside to Mrs Page*] Trust me, I thought on her : she'll fit it.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

MRS PAGE. You are come to see my daughter Anne ?

QUICK. Ay, forsooth ; and, I pray, how does good Mistress Anne ?

MRS PAGE. Go in with us and see : we have an hour's talk with you. [*Exeunt Mrs Page, Mrs Ford, and Mrs Quickly.*

PAGE. How now, Master Ford ! 150

FORD. You heard what this knave told me, did you not ?

PAGE. Yes : and you heard what the other told me ?

FORD. Do you think there is truth in them ?

PAGE. Hang 'em, slaves ! I do not think the knight would offer it : but these that accuse him in his intent towards our wives are a yoke of his discarded men ; very rogues, now they be out of service.

FORD. Were they his men ?

PAGE. Marry, were they.

FORD. I like it never the better for that. Does he lie at the Garter ? 161

PAGE. Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage toward my wife, I would turn her loose to him ; and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.

FORD. I do not misdoubt my wife ; but I would be loath to turn them together. A man may be too confident : I would have nothing lie on my head : I cannot be thus satisfied. 169

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

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PAGE. Look where my ranting host of the Garter comes : there is either liquor in his pate, or money in his purse, when he looks so merrily.

*Enter Host*

How now, mine host !

HOST. How now, bully-rook ! thou'rt a gentleman. Cavaleiro-justice, I say !

*Enter SHALLOW*

SHAL. I follow, mine host, I follow. Good even and twenty, good Master Page ! Master Page, will you go with us ? we have sport in hand.

HOST. Tell him, cavaleiro-justice ; tell him, bully-rook.

SHAL. Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor.

181

FORD. Good mine host o' the Garter, a word with you.

*[Drawing him aside.]*

HOST. What say'st thou, my bully-rook ?

SHAL. *[To Page]* Will you go with us to behold it ? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons ; and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places ; for, believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

*[They converse apart.]*

HOST. Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavaleire ?

190

# SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

FORD. None, I protest: but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him, and tell him my name is Brook; only for a jest.

HOST. My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress;—said I well?—and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight. Will you go, An-heires?

SHAL. Have with you, mine host.

PAGE. I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

199

SHAL. Tut, sir, I could have told you more. In these times you stand on distance, your passes, stocca-does, and I know not what: 't is the heart, Master Page; 't is here, 't is here. I have seen the time, with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

HOST. Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

PAGE. Have with you. I had rather hear them scold than fight. *[Exeunt Host, Shal., and Page.]* 207

FORD. Though Page be a secure fool, and stands so firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my

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192 *burnt sack*] apparently sack heated by dipping a red-hot iron in the liquid. Cf. *infra*, III, i, 100: "let *burnt sack* be the issue."

196 *An-heires*] This is the reading of the early editions, and is an obvious misprint. Theobald substituted *myn-heers* (*i. e.* the Dutch word for "gentlemen," which was not unfamiliar in colloquial English). It seems more probable that the host used the word "hearts" or "my hearts," *i. e.* brave fellows. This is the host's greeting in like circumstances, III, ii, 75, *infra* ("Farewell, my *hearts*").

208–209 *stands . . . frailty*] Malone explains "has such perfect confidence in his unchaste wife," Ford being supposed to credit every woman with frailty. Theobald read *fealty* for *frailty*, and thus

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

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opinion so easily: she was in his company at Page's house; and what they made there, I know not. Well, I will look further into 't: and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 't is labour well bestowed.

[*Exit.*]

### SCENE II—A ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL*

FAL. I will not lend thee a penny.

PIST. Why, then the world's mine oyster,  
Which I with sword will open.

FAL. Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn: I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow Nym; or else you had looked through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damned in hell for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers and tall fellows; and when Mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took 't upon mine honour thou 10 hadst it not.

PIST. Didst not thou share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?

FAL. Reason, you rogue, reason: think'st thou I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more

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removed the ambiguity, which was probably intentional on the author's part.

5-6 *grated upon*] worried, annoyed.

7 *through the grate*] *sc.* of the prison cell.

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

about me, I am no gibbet for you. Go. A short knife and a throng!—To your manor of Pickt-hatch! Go. You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue! you stand upon your honour! Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the terms of my honour precise: I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you!

PIST. I do relent: what would thou more of man?

*Enter ROBIN*

ROB. Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

FAL. Let her approach.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

QUICK. Give your worship good morrow.

FAL. Good morrow, good wife.

30

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15-16 *A short knife . . . throng*] Falstaff ironically recommends the short knife which cutpurses were wont to turn to account in a throng or crowd.

16 *Pickt-hatch*] The name of a street in Clerkenwell, London, which was notoriously frequented by loose characters. The name seems to mean a hatch (*i. e.* wicket, gate, half door) with pikes or spikes fastened at the top. Some of the houses in the street were thus distinguished.

23 *red-lattice phrases*] tavern parlour talk. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, II, ii, 76: "Through a *red-lattice*" *i. e.*, a tavern-window.

24 *bold-beating*] hectoring, braggadocio-like. For this, the original reading, Hanmer ingeniously suggested *bull-baiting*.



MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

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QUICK. Not so, an't please your worship.

FAL. Good maid, then.

QUICK. I'll be sworn ;

As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

FAL. I do believe the swearer. What with me ?

QUICK. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two ?

FAL. Two thousand, fair woman : and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

QUICK. There is one Mistress Ford, sir : — I pray, come a little nearer this ways : — I myself dwell with 40 Master Doctor Caius, —

FAL. Well, on : Mistress Ford, you say, —

QUICK. Your worship says very true : — I pray your worship, come a little nearer this ways.

FAL. I warrant thee, nobody hears ; — mine own people, mine own people.

QUICK. Are they so ? God bless them, and make them his servants !

FAL. Well, Mistress Ford ; — what of her ?

QUICK. Why, sir, she's a good creature. — Lord, 50 Lord ! your worship's a wanton ! Well, heaven forgive you and all of us, I pray !

FAL. Mistress Ford ; — come, Mistress Ford, —

QUICK. Marry, this is the short and the long of it ; you have brought her into such a canaries as 't is wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a

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55 *canaries*] a dance with a very quick step. Mrs. Quickly confused the word with "quandary."

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling <sup>60</sup> so sweetly, all musk, and so rushling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her: I had myself twenty angels given me this morning; but I defy all angels — in any such sort, as they say — but in the way of honesty: and, I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all: and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners; but, I warrant you, all is one with her. 70

FAL. But what says she to me? be brief, my good she-Mercury.

QUICK. Marry, she hath received your letter; for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify, that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

FAL. Ten and eleven.

QUICK. Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of: Master Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas, the sweet woman <sup>80</sup> leads an ill life with him! he's a very jealousy man: she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart.

FEL. Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her.

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69 *pensioners*] gentlemen of the sovereign's body guard.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR    ACT II

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QUICK. Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to your worship. Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations to you, too : and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other : and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home ; but, she hopes, there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man : surely, I think you have charms, la ; yes, in truth. 90

FAL. Not I, I assure thee : setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms.

QUICK. Blessing on your heart for't !

FAL. But, I pray thee, tell me this : has Ford's wife and Page's wife acquainted each other how they love me ? 98

QUICK. That were a jest indeed ! they have not so little grace, I hope : that were a trick indeed ! But Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves : her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page ; and, truly, Master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does : do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will : and, truly, she deserves it ; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must send her your page ; no remedy. 110

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103 *of all loves*] In *Othello*, III, i, 13, the Quarto reading, "Desire you *of all loves*," is altered in the Folios to *for loves sake*, the obvious meaning of the very common expression.

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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FAL. Why, I will.

QUICK. Nay, but do so, then : and, look you, he may come and go between you both ; and, in any case, have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing ; for 't is not good that children should know any wickedness : old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

FAL. Fare thee well : commend me to them both : there's my purse ; I am yet thy debtor. Boy, go along with this woman. [*Exeunt Mistress Quickly and Robin.*] This news distracts me !

121

PIST. This punk is one of Cupid's carriers :  
Clap on more sails ; pursue ; up with your fights :  
Give fire : she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all !

[*Exit.*

FAL. Say'st thou so, old Jack ? go thy ways ; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee ? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer ? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 't is grossly done ; so it be fairly done, no matter.

*Enter* BARDOLPH

BARD. Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with

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114 *nay-word*] Cf. V, ii, 5, *infra*, "We have a *nay-word* (*i. e.* pass word) how to know one another."

123 *fights*] "fighting sails," or screens which were hung round the decks of ships in action : a technical term in nautical treatises.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

you ; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

132

FAL. Brook is his name ?

BARD. Ay, sir.

FAL. Call him in. [*Exit Bardolph.*] Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow such liquor. Ah, ha ! Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, have I encompassed you ? go to ; via !

*Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised*

FORD. Bless you, sir !

FAL. And you, sir ! Would you speak with me ?

FORD. I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you.

141

FAL. You're welcome. What's your will ? — Give us leave, drawer. [*Exit Bardolph.*]

FORD. Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much ; my name is Brook.

FAL. Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

FORD. Good Sir John, I sue for yours : not to charge you ; for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are : the which hath something emboldened me to this unseasoned intrusion ; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

152

FAL. Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.

FORD. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me : if you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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FAL. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

FORD. I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

FAL. Speak, good Master Brook : I shall be glad to be your servant. 161

FORD. Sir, I hear you are a scholar, — I will be brief with you, — and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection : but, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own ; that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender. 170

FAL. Very well, sir ; proceed.

FORD. There is a gentlewoman in this town ; her husband's name is Ford.

FAL. Well, sir.

FORD. I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her ; followed her with a doting observance ; engrossed opportunities to meet her ; fee'd every slight occasion that could but niggardly give me sight of her ; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many to know what she would have given ; briefly, I have pursued her as love hath pursued me ; which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or in my means, meed, I am sure, I have received none ; un-

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

less experience be a jewel that I have purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this :

“ Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues ;  
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.”

FAL. Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands ?

190

FORD. Never.

FAL. Have you importuned her to such a purpose ?

FORD. Never.

FAL. Of what quality was your love, then ?

FORD. Like a fair house built on another man's ground ; so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.

197

FAL. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me ?

FORD. When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say, that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose : you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

FAL. O, sir !

FORD. Believe it, for you know it. There is money ;

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204-205 of great admittance . . . allowed] being admitted into or fitted for great society, holding a position of recognized authority and importance, and being generally allowed or commended, etc. Cf. “ of Venetian admittance,” III, iii, 49, *infra*.

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

spend it, spend it ; spend more ; spend all I have ; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife : use your art of wooing ; win her to consent to you : if any man may, you may as soon as any. 213

FAL. Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy ? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

FORD. O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself : she is too bright to be looked against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves : I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embattled against me. What say you to 't, Sir John ? 225

FAL. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money ; next, give me your hand ; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

FORD. O good sir !

FAL. I say you shall. 230

FORD. Want no money, Sir John ; you shall want none.

FAL. Want no Mistress Ford, Master Brook ; you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment ; even as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-between, parted from me : I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven ; for at that



time the jealous rascally knave her husband will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

FORD. I am blest in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, sir? 240

FAL. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not:—yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favoured. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home.

FORD. I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him, if you saw him. 247

FAL. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night. Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night. [Exit. 255]

FORD. What a damned Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says

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248 *mechanical salt-butter rogue*] an artisan, who never tasted anything but salt butter. Cf. Fletcher's *Maid in the Mill*, III, 2, where it is abusively said of a tailor, "Let him call at home in's own house for *salt-butter*."

253 *aggravate his style*] add more titles (*i. e.* "knave" and "cuckold") to those he already enjoys.

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

this is improvident jealousy? my wife hath sent to him; the hour is fixed; the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villanous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names!—Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends: but Cuckold! Wittol!—Cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass: he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous. I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitæ bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself: then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be praised for my jealousy!—Eleven o'clock the hour. I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours too soon than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

[*Exit.* 279

264 *Amaimon*] The name of a demon or sprite, which figures in Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Bk. XV, ch. ii.

265 *Barbason*] represents Scot's fiend of hell called "Barbatos." Nym mentions him again in *Hen. V*, II, i, 52: "I am not *Barbason*."

271 *aqua-vitæ*] Usquebaugh, strong spirits, with indulgence in which Irishmen were commonly credited.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT II

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### SCENE III—A FIELD NEAR WINDSOR

*Enter CAIUS and RUGBY*

CAIUS. Jack Rugby!

RUG. Sir?

CAIUS. Vat is de clock, Jack?

RUG. 'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet.

CAIUS. By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his Pible well, dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.

RUG. He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill him, if he came. 10

CAIUS. By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him. Take your rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

RUG. Alas, sir, I cannot fence.

CAIUS. Villainy, take your rapier.

RUG. Forbear; here's company.

*Enter HOST, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE*

HOST. Bless thee, bully doctor!

SHAL. Save you, Master Doctor Gaius!

PAGE. Now, good master doctor!

SLEN. Give you good morrow, sir. 20

CAIUS. Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

HOST. To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee

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22-25 to see . . . *montant*] Mine Host rattles off a long series of fencing terms. Thus "foin" is to "thrust"; "traverse" is to "parry";

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? is he dead, my Francisco? ha, bully! What says my Æsculapius? my Galen? my heart of elder? ha! is he dead, bully-stale? is he dead?

CAIUS. By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he is not show his face.

HOST. Thou art a Castalion-King-Urinal. Hector of 30 Greece, my boy!

CAIUS. I pray you, bear vitness that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

SHAL. He is the wiser man, master doctor: he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions. Is it not true, Master Page?

PAGE. Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

- "punto" and "stock" *i. e.* stoccato, both mean "thrust"; "reverse" is a backhanded stroke; "distance" is the space between the antagonists; "montant," or "montanto," is a direct blow.
- 27 *my heart of elder*] a burlesque parody of "heart of oak"; the elder-tree's heart is of pith.
- 30 *Castalion-King-Urinal*] This is the reading of the Folios. But the meaning is improved by the commonly accepted change, *Castilian, King-urinal*! "Castilian" was an epithet commonly applied to a braggadocio. In vulgar talk Elizabethan doctors were often jeered at for their professional practice of inspecting urine. The like intention is apparent in the host's insolent exclamations "bully-stale" (l. 27) and "Mock water" *i. e.* "Muck-water" (l. 51).

SHAL. Bodykins, Master Page, though I now be old, 40  
and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches  
to make one. Though we are justices, and doctors,  
and churchmen, Master Page, we have some salt of our  
youth in us ; we are the sons of women, Master Page.

PAGE. 'Tis true, Master Shallow.

SHAL. It will be found so, Master Page. Master  
Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am  
sworn of the peace : you have shewed yourself a wise  
physician, and Sir Hugh hath shewn himself a wise and  
patient churchman. You must go with me, master  
doctor. 50

HOST. Pardon, guest-justice. — A word, Mounseur  
Mock-water.

CAIUS. Mock-vater ! vat is dat ?

HOST. Mock-water, in our English tongue, is valour,  
bully.

CAIUS. By gar, den, I have as much mock-vater as de  
Englishman. — Scurvy jack-dog priest ! by gar, me vill  
cut his ears.

HOST. He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

CAIUS. Clapper-de-claw ! vat is dat ? 60

HOST. That is, he will make thee amends.

CAIUS. By gar, me do look he shall clapper-de-claw  
me ; for, by gar, me vill have it.

HOST. And I will provoke him to 't, or let him wag.

CAIUS. Me tank you for dat.

HOST. And, moreover, bully, — But first, master

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51 *Mock-water*] See note on l. 30, *supra*.

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

guest, and Master Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore. [*Aside to them.*

PAGE. Sir Hugh is there, is he ?

HOST. He is there : see what humour he is in ; and I will bring the doctor about by the fields. Will it do well ?

SHAL. We will do it.

PAGE, SHAL., and SLEN. Adieu, good master doctor.

[*Exeunt Page, Shal., and Slen.*

CAIUS. By gar, me vill kill de priest ; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

HOST. Let him die : sheathe thy impatience, throw cold water on thy choler : go about the fields with me through Frogmore : I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a-feasting ; and thou shalt woo her. Cried I aim ? said I well ?

CAIUS. By gar, me dank you vor dat : by gar, I love you ; and I shall procure-a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

HOST. For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne Page. Said I well ?

CAIUS. By gar, 't is good ; vell said.

HOST. Let us wag, then.

CAIUS. Come at my heels, Jack Rugby. [*Exeunt.*

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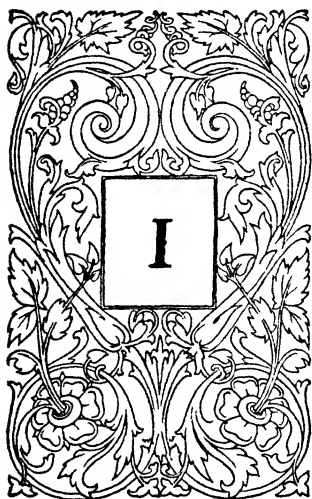
81 *Cried I aim ?*] This is Douce's ingenious emendation for the Folio reading *Cride-game*. The earlier Quartos read *cried game*. "To cry aim," *i. e.* to stand beside the archer and to suggest the direction of his aim, is a technical phrase in archery. The host asks if he has not given the doctor good advice in his suit. "Cry aim" is used in a cognate sense, III, ii, 37, *infra*, "all my neighbours shall *cry aim* (*i. e.* give encouragement).



ACT THIRD—SCENE I  
*A FIELD NEAR FROGMORE*

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE*

EVANS



PRAY YOU NOW, GOOD  
Master Slender's serving-man,  
and friend Simple by your name,  
which way have you looked for  
Master Caius, that calls himself  
doctor of physic ?

SIM. Marry, sir, the pittie-  
ward, the park-ward, every way ;  
old Windsor way, and every way  
but the town way.

EVANS. I most feheemently de-  
sire you you will also look that  
way.

SIM. I will, sir.

[*Exit.*

EVANS. Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and 10  
trempling of mind !— I shall be glad if he have deceived  
me. — How melancholies I am !— I will knog his urinals

## SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

about his knave's costard when I have goot opportunities  
for the ork. — Pless my soul ! — [Sings.

To shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sings madrigals ;  
There will we make our peds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies.  
To shallow —

Mercy on me ! I have a great dispositions to cry. [Sings. 20

Melodious birds sing madrigals —  
Whenas I sat in Pabylon —

5 *pittie-ward*] This word, which is altered in the second and later Folios to *pitty-wary*, has not been satisfactorily explained. The early emendation *city-ward* circumvents the difficulty. The suggestion that the word is equivalent to "pitwards," towards the pit, *i. e.* a sawpit or gravel pit (in or about Windsor), is speciously supported by the mention of "a sawpit," *infra*, IV, iv, 52 ; of "a pit hard by Herne's oak," V, iii, 13 ; and of "the pit," V, iv, 2. From the fact that medieval Bristol was credited by William of Worcester with a street called "Via de Pyttey," and with a gate called "Pyttey Gate," it may be that a like name was applied to some thoroughfare of Elizabethan Windsor.

15 *To shallon rivers, etc.*] These four lines form part of the lyric "Come live with me and be my love" (assigned to Christopher Marlowe), which was first printed in Jaggard's piratical miscellany called "*The Passionate Pilgrime*, By W. Shakespeare, 1599." See *The Passionate Pilgrim* facsimile (Oxford, 1905, Preface, pp. 35-38).

22 *Whenas I sat in Pabylon*] This is an interpolation into Marlowe's poem. Sir Hugh in his confusion jumbles his quotations. There is doubtless a reminiscence of *Ps.* cxxxvii, 1 : "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept." But it should be noted that in the First (imperfect) Quarto of the play (1602) Evans prefixes to his repetition of Marlowe's lines the words (omitted in the Folio), "There dwelt a man in Babylon." That is the first line



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

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And a thousand vagram posies.  
To shallow &c.

*Re-enter SIMPLE*

SIM. Yonder he is coming, this way, Sir Hugh.

EVANS. He's welcome. — [Sings.

To shallow rivers, to whose falls —

Heaven prosper the right! — What weapons is he?

SIM. No weapons, sir. There comes my master,  
Master Shallow, and another gentleman, from Frog- 30  
more, over the style, this way.

EVANS. Pray you, give me my gown; or else keep it  
in your arms.

*Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

SHAL. How now, master parson! Good morrow,  
good Sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and  
a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

SLEN. [*Aside*] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

PAGE. Save you, good Sir Hugh!

EVANS. Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

SHAL. What, the sword and the word! do you study 40  
them both, master parson?

PAGE. And youthful still! in your doublet and hose  
this raw rheumatic day!

EVANS. There is reasons and causes for it.

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of another popular contemporary ballad known as *The Ballad of Constant Susanna*; the same line is quoted by Sir Toby Belch in *Tw. Night*, II, iii, 76.

SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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PAGE. We are come to you to do a good office, master parson.

EVANS. Fery well : what is it ?

PAGE. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw. 50

SHAL. I have lived fourscore years and upward ; I never heard a man of his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of his own respect.

EVANS. What is he ?

PAGE. I think you know him ; Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.

EVANS. Got's will, and his passion of my heart ! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

PAGE. Why ?

EVANS. He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates 60 and Galen, — and he is a knave besides ; a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

PAGE. I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

SLEN. [*Aside*] O sweet Anne Page !

SHAL. It appears so, by his weapons. Keep them asunder : here comes Doctor Caius.

*Enter* HOST, CAIUS, and RUGBY

PAGE. Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

SHAL. So do you, good master doctor.

HOST. Disarm them, and let them question : let them 70  
keep their limbs whole, and hack our English.

CAIUS. I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your  
ear. Verefore vill you not meet-a me ?

EVANS. [*Aside to Caius*] Pray you, use your patience :  
in good time.

CAIUS. By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog,  
John ape.

EVANS. [*Aside to Caius*] Pray you, let us not be laugh-  
ing-stocks to other men's humours ; I desire you in  
friendship, and I will one way or other make you 80  
amends. [*Aloud*] I will knog your urinals about your  
knave's cogscorb for missing your meetings and  
appointments.

CAIUS. Diable ! — Jack Rugby, — mine host de Jar-  
teer, — have I not stay for him to kill him ? have I not,  
at de place I did appoint ?

EVANS. As I am a Christians soul, now, look you,  
this is the place appointed : I'll be judgement by mine  
host of the Garter.

HOST. Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and  
Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer !

90

CAIUS. Ay, dat is very good ; excellent.

HOST. Peace, I say ! hear mine host of the Garter.  
Am I politic ? am I subtle ? am I a Machiavel ? Shall  
I lose my doctor ? no ; he gives me the potions and the  
motions. Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir  
Hugh ? no ; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs.  
Give me thy hand, terrestrial ; so. Give me thy hand,  
celestial ; so. Boys of art, I have deceived you both ; I

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

have directed you to wrong places : your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue. Come, lay their swords to pawn. Follow me, lads of peace ; follow, follow, follow. 102

SHAL. Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

SLEN. [*Aside*] O sweet Anne Page!

[*Exeunt Shal., Slen., Page, and Host.*]

CAIUS. Ha, do I perceive dat? have you make-a de sot of us, ha, ha?

EVANS. This is well ; he has made us his vlouting-stog. — I desire you that we may be friends ; and let us knog our prains together to be revenge on this same scall, scurvy, cogging companion, the host of the Garter. 111

CAIUS. By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me where is Anne Page ; by gar, he deceive me too.

EVANS. Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you, follow. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II —THE STREET, IN WINDSOR

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

MRS PAGE. Nay, keep your way, little gallant ; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader.

100 *burnt sack*] See II, i, 192, *supra*.

108 *vlouting-stog*] Evans' mispronunciation of "flouting-stock," i. e. butt. Cf. IV, v, 74, *infra*.

110 *scall*] "Scall" is equivalent to "scald," and means much the same as "scurvy," the word which follows.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

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Whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

ROB. I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man than follow him like a dwarf.

MRS PAGE. O, you are a flattering boy: now I see you 'll be a courtier.

*Enter FORD*

FORD. Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

MRS PAGE. Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

FORD. Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for <sup>10</sup> want of company. I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

MRS PAGE. Be sure of that, — two other husbands.

FORD. Where had you this pretty weathercock?

MRS PAGE. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of. — What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

ROB. Sir John Falstaff.

FORD. Sir John Falstaff!

MRS PAGE. He, he; I can never hit on's name. <sup>20</sup> There is such a league between my good man and he! — Is your wife at home indeed?

FORD. Indeed she is.

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<sup>10</sup> *as idle as she may hang together*] as idle as one can possibly be: a colloquialism equivalent to the modern slang "as idle as she can stick."

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS PAGE. By your leave, sir : I am sick till I see her.  
[*Exeunt Mrs Page and Robin.*]

FORD. Has Page any brains ? hath he any eyes ? hath he any thinking ? Sure, they sleep ; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty mile, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's inclination ; he gives her folly motion and advantage : and now she's going to my 30 wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind. And Falstaff's boy with her ! Good plots, they are laid ; and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well ; I will take him, then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so seeming Mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actæon ; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim. [Clock heard.] The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search : there I shall find Falstaff : I shall be rather praised for this than mocked ; for it is as 40 positive as the earth is firm that Falstaff is there : I will go.

28 *twelve score*] twelve score yards.

31-32 *may hear this shower . . . wind*] A phrase implying the coming of a storm, which is often heralded by a whistling or singing note in the rising wind. Cf. *Tempest*, II, ii, 19 : " Another storm brewing : I hear it *sing i' the wind.*"

36 *Actæon*] For another reference to this mythical hero see *supra*, II, i, 106.

37 *cry aim*] give encouragement. See *supra*, II, iii, 81 and note, " Cried I aim ? "

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR    ACT III

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*Enter* PAGE, SHALLOW, SLENDER, Host, SIR HUGH EVANS, CAIUS,  
and RUGBY

SHAL., PAGE, &c. Well met, Master Ford.

FORD. Trust me, a good knot : I have good cheer at home ; and I pray you all go with me.

SHAL. I must excuse myself, Master Ford.

SLEN. And so must I, sir : we have appointed to dine with Mistress Anne, and I would not break with her for more money than I'll speak of.

SHAL. We have lingered about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we 50 shall have our answer.

SLEN. I hope I have your good will, father Page.

PAGE. You have, Master Slender ; I stand wholly for you : — but my wife, master doctor, is for you altogether.

CAIUS. Ay, be-gar ; and de maid is love-a me : my nursh-a Quickly tell me so mush.

HOST. What say you to young Master Fenton ? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May : he will carry't, he will carry't ; 'tis in his buttons ; he will 60 carry't.

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43 *a good knot*] a welcome gathering of friends. Cf. IV, ii, 103 : "A knot, a ging, a pack."

59 *speaks holiday*] uses choice phrases. Cf. "High-day writ," *Merch. of Ven.*, II, ix, 98, and "festival terms," *Much Ado*, V, ii, 37.

60 *in his buttons*] altogether in his compass or ability. Cf. Marston, *The Fawn*, II, i, 66 : "Thou art now *within the buttons* of the prince," *i. e.*, in the innermost confidence of the prince.

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

PAGE. Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having: he kept company with the wild prince and Poins; he is of too high a region; he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance: if he take her, let him take her simply; the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

FORD. I beseech you heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner: besides your cheer, you shall have sport; I will show you a monster. Master doctor, you 70 shall go; so shall you, Master Page; and you, Sir Hugh.

SHAL. Well, fare you well: we shall have the freer wooing at Master Page's. *[Exeunt Shal. and Slen.]*

CAIUS. Go home, John Rugby; I come anon.

*[Exit Rugby.]*

HOST. Farewell, my hearts: I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him. *[Exit.]*

FORD. *[Aside]* I think I shall drink in pipe-wine first

62 *no having*] no property or fortune. Cf. *Tw. Night*, III, iv, 329: "my *having* is not much."

63 *the wild prince and Poins*] Prince Hal, afterwards Henry V, and his favourite companion Poins, both of whom are leading characters in the two parts of *Hen. IV.*

*too high a region*] too high a rank, too highly placed. "Region" is often applied to the highest layers of the atmospheric air.

77 *drink in pipe-wine*] There is a pun on the word "pipe," which is employed in the double sense of an instrument used for dance-music and a liquid-measure. Similarly, "canary" is both a dance and a wine. The meaning is to the same effect as that of the next sentence: "I'll make him dance." "Drink in" is equivalent to "drink." "Pipe-wine" is literally wine drawn from the pipe (or barrel of two hogsheads).



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

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with him ; I'll make him dance. Will you go, gentles ?

ALL. Have with you to see this monster. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III — A ROOM IN FORD'S HOUSE

*Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE*

MRS FORD. What, John ! What, Robert !

MRS PAGE. Quickly, quickly ! — is the buck-basket —

MRS FORD. I warrant. What, Robin, I say !

*Enter Servants with a basket*

MRS PAGE. Come, come, come.

MRS FORD. Here, set it down.

MRS PAGE. Give your men the charge ; we must be brief.

MRS FORD. Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brew-house ; and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and, without any pause or staggering, take this basket on your shoulders : <sup>10</sup> that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet-mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side.

MRS PAGE. You will do it ?

---

<sup>2</sup> *buck-basket*] The basket in which dirty clothes were sent to be "bucked," or washed by the thorough process commonly known as "bucking." Much play is made of the word buck, *infra*, lines 237-239.

SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS FORD. I ha' told them over and over ; they lack no direction. Be gone, and come when you are called.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

MRS PAGE. Here comes little Robin.

*Enter ROBIN*

MRS FORD. How now, my eyas-musket ! what news with you ?

ROB. My master, Sir John, is come in at your back- 20 door, Mistress Ford, and requests your company.

MRS PAGE. You little Jack-a-Lent, have you been true to us ?

ROB. Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your being here, and hath threatened to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it ; for he swears he'll turn me away.

MRS PAGE. Thou'rt a good boy : this secrecy of thine shall be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose. I'll go hide me.

MRS FORD. Do so. Go tell thy master I am alone. 30  
[*Exit Robin.*] Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MRS PAGE. I warrant thee ; if I do not act it, hiss me. [Exit.]

MRS FORD. Go to, then : we'll use this unwholesome

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22 *Jack-a-Lent*] a puppet, at which, during Lent, children at play flung sticks or stones. The word is repeated *infra*, V, v, 123. Cf. *Greenes Tu Quoque* (1614): "if a boy that in throwing at his *Jack-a-Lent* chance to hit me on the shins" (*Dodsley's Old Plays*, ed. Hazlitt, XI, 262).

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

humidity, this gross watery pumpion ; we'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

FAL. "Have I caught" thee, "my heavenly jewel?" Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough : this is the period of my ambition : O this blessed hour !

MRS FORD. O sweet Sir John !

FAL. Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, <sup>40</sup> Mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish : I would thy husband were dead : I'll speak it before the best lord ; I would make thee my lady.

MRS FORD. I your lady, Sir John ! alas, I should be a pitiful lady !

FAL. Let the court of France show me such another. I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond : thou hast the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

35 *turtles from jays*] faithful wives from loose women. Cf. *Cymb.*, III, iv, 52 : "Some *jay* of Italy." In Italian *putta* means both jay and harlot.

36 "*Have I caught*" . . . "*my heavenly jewel?*" ] These words form the first line of the second song in Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (first published in 1591). The early Quartos of the play rightly omit *thee*.

48-49 *the ship-tire* . . . *of Venetian admittance*] Falstaff refers to three kinds of headdress, firstly that shaped like a ship, secondly "the tire-valiant," and lastly that of the quality held in esteem at Venice, in the Venetian fashion. (Cf. "*of great admittance*," II, ii, 204, *supra*.) The "tire-valiant" is not easy to explain. The early

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS FORD. A plain kerchief, Sir John : my brows <sup>50</sup> become nothing else ; nor that well neither.

FAL. By the Lord, thou art a traitor to say so : thou wouldst make an absolute courtier ; and the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait in a semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

MRS FORD. Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

FAL. What made me love thee ? let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog, and say thou art this and that, like a <sup>60</sup> many of these lispings hawthorn-buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple time ; I cannot : but I love thee ; none but thee ; and thou deservest it.

MRS FORD. Do not betray me, sir. I fear you love Mistress Page.

Quartos read "tire-vellet" (*i. e.* velvet), which makes good sense. Stubbes in his *Anatomic of Abuses*, Vol. I, p. 69, denounces with heat velvet ornaments for the head. "Tire-valiant" can only mean headdress of very "brave" *i. e.* showy, design.

<sup>55</sup> *Fortune thy foe*] "Fortune my foe" are the opening words of a popular ballad deploring the caprices of Fortune. It is found in early ballad collections, and runs to twenty-two stanzas. The opening line runs, "*Fortune my foe*, why dost thou frown on me ?" Cf. "*Fortune my foe* is a friend to it" (Beaumont and Fletcher's *Custom of the Country*, I, i, 13). The whole of the first stanza is quoted in the comedy, *The Maydes Metamorphosis*, 1600.

<sup>62</sup> *Bucklersbury*] A street at the east end of Cheapside, London, which was full of apothecaries' shops and was redolent of medicinal herbs or simples in early summer, when they were freshly stored.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

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FAL. Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the Counter-gate, which is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.

MRS FORD. Well, heaven knows how I love you ; and you shall one day find it. 70

FAL. Keep in that mind ; I'll deserve it.

MRS FORD. Nay, I must tell you, so you do ; or else I could not be in that mind.

ROB. [*Within*] Mistress Ford, Mistress Ford ! here's Mistress Page at the door, sweating, and blowing, and looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

FAL. She shall not see me : I will ensconce me behind the arras.

MRS FORD. Pray you, do so : she's a very tattling woman. [*Falstaff' hides himself.* 80

*Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

What's the matter ? how now !

MRS PAGE. O Mistress Ford, what have you done ? You're shamed, you're overthrown, you're undone for ever !

67 *Counter-gate*] the gate of the gaol. Two prisons in the city of London were known respectively as the Wood Street *Counter*, the Poultry *Counter*. "The *Counter*" was the title of the gaol in Southwark.

78 *the arras*] the tapestry which hung from wooden rods at a little distance from the wall of the room. Falstaff, in *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, Borachio in *Much Ado*, I, iii, and Polonius in *Hamlet*, III, iii, all seek the same hiding-place.

SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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MRS FORD. What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

MRS PAGE. O well-a-day, Mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

MRS FORD. What cause of suspicion?

MRS PAGE. What cause of suspicion! Out upon you! how am I mistook in you! 90

MRS FORD. Why, alas, what's the matter?

MRS PAGE. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence: you are undone.

MRS FORD. 'T is not so, I hope.

MRS PAGE. Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here! but 't is most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever. 104

MRS FORD. What shall I do? There is a gentleman my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

MRS PAGE. For shame! never stand "you had rather" and "you had rather:" your husband's here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance: in the house you

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me ! Look, here is a basket : if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here ; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking : or, — it is whiting-time, — send him by your two men to Datchet-mead. 116

MRS FORD. He's too big to go in there. What shall I do ?

FAL. [*Coming forward*] Let me see't, let me see't, O, let me see't ! — I'll in, I'll in. — Follow your friend's counsel. — I'll in. 121

MRS PAGE. What, Sir John Falstaff ! Are these your letters, knight ?

FAL. I love thee. — Help me away. — Let me creep in here. — I'll never —

*[Gets into the basket ; they cover him with foul linen.]*

MRS PAGE. Help to cover your master, boy. — Call your men, Mistress Ford. — You dissembling knight !

MRS FORD. What, John ! Robert ! John !

*[Exit Robin.]*

*Re-enter Servants*

Go take up these clothes here quickly. — Where's the cowl-staff ? look, how you drumble ! — Carry them to the laundress in Datchet-mead ; quickly, come. 131

115 *whiting-time*] bleaching-time, spring-time. Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 893 :  
“ And maidens bleach their summer smocks.”

124 *I love thee*] Malone and most of his successors add from the early Quartos, *and none but thee*. The words sound like a quotation from some old song. Falstaff had already told Mrs. Ford “ I love thee ; none but thee,” *supra*, line 63.

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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*Enter* FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD. Pray you, come near : if I suspect without cause, why then make sport at me ; then let me be your jest ; I deserve it. — How now ! whither bear you this ?

SERV. To the laundress, forsooth.

MRS FORD. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it ? You were best meddle with buck-washing. 137

FORD. Buck ! — I would I could wash myself of the buck ! — Buck, buck, buck ! Ay, buck ; I warrant you, buck ; and of the season too, it shall appear. [*Exeunt Servants with the basket.*] Gentlemen, I have dreamed to-night ; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys : ascend my chambers ; search, seek, find out : I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way first. [*Locking the door.*] So, now uncape.

PAGE. Good Master Ford, be contented : you wrong yourself too much.

FORD. True, Master Page. Up, gentlemen ; you shall see sport anon : follow me, gentlemen. [*Exit.*] 149

EVANS. This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

CAIUS. By gar, 't is no the fashion of France ; it is not jealous in France.

PAGE. Nay, follow him, gentlemen ; see the issue of his search. [*Exeunt Page, Caius, and Evans.*]

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137 *buck-washing*] See *supra*, l. 2, and note.

145 *uncape*] No other example of this word is found. The meaning is obviously "uncouple" (of hounds in hunting). "Cape" was occasionally used in the sense of "collar." Cf. Madden's *Diary of William Silence*, p. 177, footnote 3.



MRS PAGE. Is there not a double excellency in this ?

MRS FORD. I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or Sir John.

MRS PAGE. What a taking was he in when your husband asked who was in the basket !

MRS FORD. I am half afraid he will have need of washing ; so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit. 161

MRS PAGE. Hang him, dishonest rascal ! I would all of the same strain were in the same distress.

MRS FORD. I think my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being here ; for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

MRS PAGE. I will lay a plot to try that ; and we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff : his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine. 169

MRS FORD. Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water ; and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment ?

MRS PAGE. We will do it : let him be sent for to-morrow, eight o'clock, to have amends.

*Re-enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

FORD. I cannot find him : may be the knave bragged of that he could not compass.

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163 *the same strain*] Cf. II, i, 77 and note, *supra*.

170 *carrion*] a term of contempt. Capulet calls Juliet "you green-sickness carrion !" *Rom. and Jul.*, III, v, 156.

SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS PAGE. [*Aside to Mrs Ford*] Heard you that?

MRS FORD. You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

FORD. Ay, I do so.

180

MRS FORD. Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

FORD. Amen!

MRS PAGE. You do yourself mighty wrong, Master Ford.

FORD. Ay, ay; I must bear it.

EVANS. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgement!

CAIUS. By gar, nor I too: there is no bodies.

PAGE. Fie, fie, Master Ford! are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not ha' your distemper in this kind for the wealth of Windsor Castle.

193

FORD. 'Tis my fault, Master Page: I suffer for it.

EVANS. You suffer for a pad conscience: your wife is as honest a 'omans as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

CAIUS. By gar, I see 't is an honest woman.

FORD. Well, I promised you a dinner. — Come, come, walk in the Park: I pray you, pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you why I have done this. — Come, wife; come, Mistress Page. — I pray you, pardon me; pray heartily pardon me.

203

PAGE. Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll

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179 *You use me well*] Theobald prefixed the words *Ay, ay; peace*: from the early Quartos.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

mock him. I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast: after, we'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?

FORD. Any thing.

EVANS. If there is one, I shall make two in the company. 210

CAIUS. If there be one or two, I shall make-a the turd.

FORD. Pray you, go, Master Page.

EVANS. I pray you now, remembrance to-morrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

CAIUS. Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart!

EVANS. A lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!  
[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE IV — A ROOM IN PAGE'S HOUSE

*Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE*

FENT. I see I cannot get thy father's love;  
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

ANNE. Alas, how then?

FENT. Why, thou must be thyself.  
He doth object I am too great of birth;  
And that, my state being gall'd with my expense,  
I seek to heal it only by his wealth:  
Besides these, other bars he lays before me, —  
My riots past, my wild societies;  
And tells me 't is a thing impossible  
I should love thee but as a property.

10

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8 *societies*] associates, companions.

## SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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ANNE. May be he tells you true.

FENT. No, heaven so speed me in my time to come !  
Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth  
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne :  
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value  
Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags ;  
And 't is the very riches of thyself  
That now I aim at.

ANNE. Gentle Master Fenton,  
Yet seek my father's love ; still seek it, sir :  
If opportunity and humblest suit  
Cannot attain it, why, then, — hark you hither !  
[*They converse apart.*]

20

*Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MISTRESS QUICKLY*

SHAL. Break their talk, Mistress Quickly: my kinsman shall speak for himself.

SLEN. I'll make a shaft or a bolt on 't : 'slid, 't is but venturing.

SHAL. Be not dismayed.

SLEN. No, she shall not dismay me: I care not for that, but that I am afraid.

QUICK. Hark ye; Master Slender would speak a word with you.

30

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16 *stamps in gold*] Cf. *Macb.*, IV, iii, 153, "a golden stamp," i. e. a coin.

24 *shaft or a bolt*] proverbial expression for "I'll do it one way or another." A shaft was a long, slender arrow; a bolt, a short, thick one.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

---

ANNE. I come to him. [*Aside*] This is my father's choice.

O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults  
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a-year!

QUICK. And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a word with you.

SHAL. She's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father!

SLEN. I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out 40 of a pen, good uncle.

SHAL. Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

SLEN. Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

SHAL. He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

SLEN. Ay, that I will, come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a squire.

SHAL. He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds ointure.

ANNE. Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself. 50

SHAL. Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort. She calls you, coz: I'll leave you.

ANNE. Now, Master Slender, —

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32-33 *O, what . . . a year!*] Cf. *Two Gent.*, III, i, 355, 356, where a woman's *faults* are said to be made *gracious* by a wealthy dowry.

46 *come cut and long-tail*] whatever come, alluding to dogs with short and long tails; equivalent to "bob-tag and rag-tail."

SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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SLEN. Now, good Mistress Anne, —

ANNE. What is your will?

SLEN. My will! od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

ANNE. I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

60

SLEN. Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions: if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go better that I can: you may ask your father; here he comes.

*Enter PAGE and MISTRESS PAGE*

PAGE. Now, Master Slender: love him, daughter Anne. —

Why, how now! what does Master Fenton here?

You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house:

I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of.

FENT. Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

70

MRS PAGE. Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

PAGE. She is no match for you.

FENT. Sir, will you hear me?

PAGE. No, good Master Fenton.

---

56, 57 *will . . . will*] See for the same pun *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii, 21–22, and note.

63 *happy man be his dole*] good fortune go with you. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, I, i, 135.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

Come, Master Shallow ; come, son Slender, in.  
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton.

[*Exeunt Page, Shal., and Slen.*]

QUICK. Speak to Mistress Page.

FENT. Good Mistress Page, for that I love your  
daughter

In such a righteous fashion as I do,  
Perforce, against all checks, rebukes and manners,  
I must advance the colours of my love, 80  
And not retire : let me have your good will.

ANNE. Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

MRS PAGE. I mean it not ; I seek you a better  
husband.

QUICK. That 's my master, master doctor.

ANNE. Alas, I had rather be set quick i' the earth,  
And bowl'd to death with turnips !

MRS PAGE. Come, trouble not yourself. Good Mas-  
ter Fenton,

I will not be your friend nor enemy :  
My daughter will I question how she loves you,  
And as I find her, so am I affected. 90  
Till then farewell, sir : she must needs go in ;  
Her father will be angry.

FENT. Farewell, gentle mistress : farewell, Nan.

[*Exeunt Mrs Page and Anne.*]

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80 *I must advance the colours*] For the metaphor cf. *L. L. L.*, III, i, 177, 178 : " And I to be a corporal of his [Cupid's] field and wear his colours."

85-86] *Alas, I had rather . . . turnips*] Cf. Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* : " Would I had been set in the ground, all but the head of me, . . . and had my brains bom'd at."

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

QUICK. This is my doing now : "Nay," said I, "will you cast away your child on a fool, and a physician ? Look on Master Fenton : " this is my doing.

FENT. I thank thee ; and I pray thee, once to-night Give my sweet Nan this ring : there's for thy pains. 98

QUICK. Now heaven send thee good fortune ! [*Exit Fenton.*] A kind heart he hath : a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I would my master had Mistress Anne ; or I would Master Slender had her ; or, in sooth, I would Master Fenton had her : I will do what I can for them all three ; for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word ; but speciously for Master Fenton. Well, I must of another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses : what a beast am I to slack it ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE V — A ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH*

FAL. Bardolph, I say, —

BARD. Here, sir.

FAL. Go fetch me a quart of sack ; put a toast in 't.  
[*Exit Bard.*] Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the

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95 *a fool, and a physician*] The two words were constantly brought together colloquially, apparently in vague allusion to the proverbial phrase, "A man of forty is either a fool or his own physician." Some editors read *or for and*.

106 *speciously*] blunder for "especially," as at IV, v, 103, *infra*.



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

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Thames? Well, if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out, and buttered, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' the litter: and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity<sup>10</sup> in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drowned, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow,—a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

*Re-enter BARDOLPH with sack.*

BARD. Here's Mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

FAL. Come, let me pour in some sack to the Thames water; for my belly's as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins. Call her in.<sup>20</sup>

BARD. Come in, woman!

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

QUICK. By your leave; I cry you mercy: give your worship good morrow.

FAL. Take away these chalices. Go brew me a pottle of sack finely.

BARD. With eggs, sir?

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9 *blind bitch's puppies*] a colloquial inversion for a "bitch's blind puppies."

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

FAL. Simple of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage. [*Exit Bardolph.*] How now!

QUICK. Marry, sir, I come to your worship from Mistress Ford.

30

FAL. Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough; I was thrown into the ford; I have my belly full of ford.

QUICK. Alas the day! good heart. that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

FAL. So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

QUICK. Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a-birding; she desires you once more to come 40 to her between eight and nine: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

FAL. Well, I will visit her: tell her so; and bid her think what a man is: let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

QUICK. I will tell her.

FAL. Do so. Between nine and ten, sayest thou?

QUICK. Eight and nine, sir.

FAL. Well, be gone: I will not miss her.

QUICK. Peace be with you, sir. [*Exit.* 50

FAL. I marvel I hear not of Master Brook; he sent me word to stay within: I like his money well. — O, here he comes.

34 *take on with*] rage at, get in a passion with. Cf. IV, ii, 18, *infra*,

"He so *takes on* yonder *with* my husband."

35 *erection*] blunder for "direction."

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT III

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*Enter FORD*

FORD. Bless you, sir !

FAL. Now, Master Brook, — you come to know what hath passed between me and Ford's wife ?

FORD. That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

FAL. Master Brook, I will not lie to you : I was at her house the hour she appointed me.

FORD. And sped you, sir ?

60

FAL. Very ill-favouredly, Master Brook.

FORD. How so, sir ? Did she change her determination ?

FAL. No, Master Brook ; but the peaking Cornuto her husband, Master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, protested, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy ; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

70

FORD. What, while you were there ?

FAL. While I was there.

FORD. And did he search for you, and could not find you ?

FAL. You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one Mistress Page ; gives intelligence of Ford's approach ; and, in her invention and Ford's wife's distraction, they conveyed me into a buck-basket.

FORD. A buck-basket !

FAL. By the Lord, a buck-basket ! — rammed me in

## SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, greasy napkins ; that, Master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villanous smell that ever offended nostril.

FORD. And how long lay you there ?

FAL. Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook, what I have suffered to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane : they took me on their shoulders ; met the jealous knave their master in the door, who asked them once or twice <sup>90</sup> what they had in their basket : I quaked for fear, lest the lunatic knave would have searched it ; but fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well : on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master Brook : I suffered the pangs of three several deaths ; first, an intolerable fright, to be detected with a jealous rotten bell-wether ; next, to be compassed, like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head, <sup>99</sup> and then, to be stopped in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease : think of that, — a man of my kidney, — think of that, — that am as subject to heat as butter ; a man of continual dissolution and thaw : it was a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I

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97 *detected with*] detected by. The usage is common. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, III, ii, 197 : "Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, *with* traitors."

98 *bilbo*] the blade of a bilbo, *i. e.* a Spanish sword from Bilbao, which was extremely flexible and elastic. Cf. I, i, 146, *supra*.

was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe ; think of that, — hissing hot, — think of that, Master Brook.

FORD. In good sadness, sir, I am sorry that for my sake you have suffered all this. My suit, then, is desperate ; you 'll undertake her no more ? 111

FAL. Master Brook, I will be thrown into Etna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a-birding : I have received from her another embassy of meeting ; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, Master Brook.

FORD. 'T is past eight already, sir.

FAL. Is it ? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed ; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. Adieu. You shall have her, Master Brook ; Master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford. [Exit. 122

FORD. Hum ! ha ! is this a vision ? is this a dream ? do I sleep ? Master Ford, awake ! awake, Master Ford ! there 's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford. This 't is to be married ! this 't is to have linen and buck-baskets ! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am : I will now take the lecher ; he is at my house ; he cannot 'scape me ; 't is impossible he should ; he cannot creep into a halfpenny purse, nor into a pepper-box : but, lest

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109 *In good sadness*] In sober earnest. Cf. IV, ii, 93, *infra*, and note on *T. of Shrew*, V, ii, 63.

129 *halfpenny purse*] The halfpenny, which was of silver, was a very

## SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame: if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me; — I'll be horn-mad. [Exit. 134

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small coin. Cf. Bacon's *Essays*, 1597, Dedication: "The new *halfpence* which, though the silver were good, yet the pieces were small."

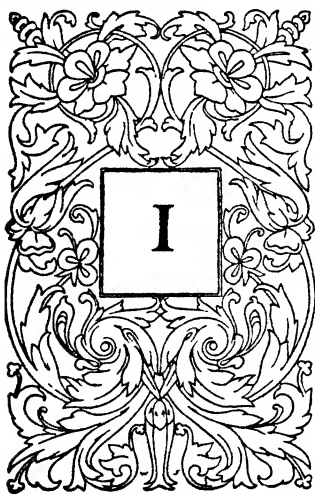


## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I

### A STREET

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS QUICKLY, and WILLIAM*

MRS PAGE



S HE AT MASTER FORD'S  
already, think'st thou ?

QUICK. Sure he is by this, or  
will be presently : but, truly, he  
is very courageous mad about his  
throwing into the water. Mis-  
tress Ford desires you to come  
suddenly.

MRS PAGE. I'll be with her  
by and by ; I'll but bring my  
young man here to school. Look,  
where his master comes ; 't is a  
playing-day, I see.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS*

How now, Sir Hugh ! no school to-day ?

EVANS. No ; Master Slender is let the boys leave to 10  
play.

SCENE I MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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QUICK. Blessing of his heart!

MRS PAGE. Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you, ask him some questions in his accidence.

EVANS. Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

MRS PAGE. Come on, sirrah; hold up your head; answer your master, be not afraid.

EVANS. William, how many numbers is in nouns?

WILL. Two.

20

QUICK. Truly, I thought there had been one number more, because they say, "Od's nouns."

EVANS. Peace your tattlings! What is "fair," William?

WILL. Pulcher.

QUICK. Polecats! there are fairer things than polecats, sure.

EVANS. You are a very simplicity 'oman: I pray you, peace. — What is "lapis," William?

WILL. A stone.

EVANS. And what is "a stone," William?

30

WILL. A pebble.

EVANS. No, it is "lapis": I pray you, remember in your prain.

WILL. Lapis.

EVANS. That is a good William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

---

*Act IV, Sc. I*] This scene is omitted from the two earliest Quartos.

It was first printed in the First Folio.

\* *courageous*] apparently a blunder for "outrageous."



WILL. Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined, Singulariter, nominativo, hic, hæc, hoc.

EVANS. Nominativo, hig, hag, hog; pray you, mark: genitivo, hujus. Well, what is your accusative case? 40

WILL. Accusativo, hinc.

EVANS. I pray you, have your remembrance, child; accusativo, hung, hang, hog.

QUICK. "Hang-hog" is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

EVANS. Leave your prabbles, 'oman. — What is the focative case, William?

WILL. O, — vocativo, O.

EVANS. Remember, William; focative is caret.

QUICK. And that's a good root.

EVANS. 'Oman, forbear. 50

MRS PAGE. Peace!

EVANS. What is your genitive case plural, William?

WILL. Genitive case!

EVANS. Ay.

WILL. Genitive, — horum, harum, horum.

QUICK. Vengeance of Jenny's case! fie on her! never name her, child, if she be a whore.

EVANS. For shame, 'oman.

QUICK. You do ill to teach the child such words: — he teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do 60 fast enough of themselves, and to call "horum": — fie upon you!

---

45 *prabbles*] chatter; cf. "pribbles and prabbles," *supra*, I, i, 50, and *infra*, V, v, 153.

60 *hick and to hack*] apparently used in a somewhat ribald significance.

See note on II, i, 45, *supra*: "These knights will *hack*."

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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EVANS. 'Oman, art thou lunatics? hast thou no understandings for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? Thou art as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.

MRS PAGE. Prithee, hold thy peace.

EVANS. Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

WILL. Forsooth, I have forgot.

EVANS. It is qui, quæ, quod: if you forget your <sup>70</sup> "quies," your "quæs," and your "quods," you must be preeches. Go your ways, and play; go.

MRS PAGE. He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

EVANS. He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.

MRS PAGE. Adieu, good Sir Hugh. [*Exit Sir Hugh.*  
Get you home, boy. Come, we stay too long. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II — A ROOM IN FORD'S HOUSE

*Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD*

FAL. Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance. I see you are obsequious in your love, and

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<sup>71</sup> *preeches*] breeches: breeched, *i. e.* flogged.

<sup>1-2</sup> *your sorrow . . . love*] your grief has blotted out the memory of my sufferings. I see your devotion (to me) is seriously meant (of the seriousness attaching to funeral rites or obsequies). Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 92, "*obsequious* sorrow."

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

---

I profess requital to a hair's breadth ; not only, Mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now ?

MRS FORD. He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

MRS PAGE. [*Within*] What, ho, gossip Ford ! what, ho !

MRS FORD. Step into the chamber, Sir John.

[*Exit Falstaff.*]

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE*

MRS PAGE. How now, sweetheart ! who's at home 10 besides yourself ?

MRS FORD. Why, none but mine own people.

MRS PAGE. Indeed !

MRS FORD. No, certainly. [*Aside to her*] Speak louder.

MRS PAGE. Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

MRS FORD. Why ?

MRS PAGE. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again : he so takes on yonder with my husband ; so rails against all married mankind ; so curses all Eve's daughters, of what complexion soever ; and so buffets 20 himself on the forehead, crying, " Peer out, peer out ! " that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility, and patience, to this his distemper he is in now : I am glad the fat knight is not here.

---

18 *lunes . . . husband*] " Lunes " means " fits of lunacy."

*takes on . . . with*] gets in a passion with, as at III, v, 34, *supra*,  
" she does so take on with her men."

21 *Peer out, peer out !*] Horns, make your appearance, come forth !

SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

MRS FORD. Why, does he talk of him ?

MRS PAGE. Of none but him ; and swears he was carried out, the last time he searched for him, in a basket ; protests to my husband he is now here ; and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion : but I am glad the knight is not here ; now he shall see <sup>30</sup> his own foolery.

MRS FORD. How near is he, Mistress Page ?

MRS PAGE. Hard by, at street end ; he will be here anon.

MRS FORD. I am undone ! — the knight is here.

MRS PAGE. Why, then, you are utterly shamed, and he's but a dead man. What a woman are you ! — Away with him, away with him ! better shame than murder.

MRS FORD. Which way should he go ? how should I bestow him ? Shall I put him into the basket again ?

*Re-enter FALSTAFF.*

FAL. No, I'll come no more i' the basket. May I <sup>40</sup> not go out ere he come ?

MRS PAGE. Alas, three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out ; otherwise you might slip away ere he came. But what make you here ?

FAL. What shall I do ? — I'll creep up into the chimney.

MRS FORD. There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces. Creep into the kiln-hole.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

---

FAL. Where is it ?

MRS FORD. He will seek there, on my word. Neither <sup>50</sup>  
press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an  
abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to  
them by his note : there is no hiding you in the house.

FAL. I'll go out, then.

MRS PAGE. If you go out in your own semblance,  
you die, Sir John. Unless you go out disguised, —

MRS FORD. How might we disguise him ?

MRS PAGE. Alas the day, I know not ! There is no  
woman's gown big enough for him ; otherwise he might  
put on a hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape. <sup>60</sup>

FAL. Good hearts, devise something : any extremity  
rather than a mischief.

MRS FORD. My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brent-  
ford, has a gown above.

MRS PAGE. On my word, it will serve him ; she's as  
big as he is : and there's her thrummed hat, and her  
muffler too. Run up, Sir John.

MRS FORD. Go, go, sweet Sir John : Mistress Page  
and I will look some linen for your head.

MRS PAGE. Quick, quick ! we'll come dress you <sup>70</sup>  
straight : put on the gown the while. [*Exit Falstaff.*]

MRS FORD. I would my husband would meet him in  
this shape : he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford ;  
he swears she's a witch ; forbade her my house, and  
hath threatened to beat her.

---

<sup>52</sup> *abstract*] short list or inventory.

<sup>66</sup> *thrummed hat*] hat made of coarse yarn.

SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS PAGE. Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!

MRS FORD. But is my husband coming?

MRS PAGE. Ay, in good sadness, is he; and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence. 80

MRS FORD. We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

MRS PAGE. Nay, but he'll be here presently: let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

MRS FORD. I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket. Go up; I'll bring linen for him straight. [Exit.]

MRS PAGE. Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.

We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do, 90

Wives may be merry, and yet honest too:

We do not act that often jest and laugh;

'Tis old, but true, — Still swine eats all the draff. [Exit.]

*Re-enter MISTRESS FORD with two Servants*

MRS FORD. Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders: your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him: quickly, dispatch. [Exit.]

FIRST SERV. Come, come, take it up.

SEC. SERV. Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.

FIRST SERV. I hope not; I had as lief bear so much 99  
lead.

79 *in good sadness*] in sober earnest. Cf. III, v, 109, *supra*, and note on *T. of Shrew*, V, ii, 63.

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

*Enter FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

FORD. Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain! Somebody call my wife. Youth in a basket!—O you pandarly rascals! there's a knot, a ging, a pack, a conspiracy against me: now shall the devil be shamed.—What, wife, I say!—Come, come forth! Behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching!

PAGE. Why, this passes, Master Ford; you are not to go loose any longer; you must be pinioned.

EVANS. Why, this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog!

110

SHAL. Indeed, Master Ford, this is not well, indeed.

FORD. So say I too, sir.

*Re-enter MISTRESS FORD*

Come hither, Mistress Ford; Mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

MRS FORD. Heaven be my witness you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

FORD. Well said, brazen-face! hold it out. Come forth, sirrah!

*[Pulling clothes out of the basket.]* 120

PAGE. This passes!

103 *a knot, a ging, a pack*] an assembly, a gang, a crowd. "Knot" is similarly used, III, ii, 43, *supra*, "a good knot."

119 *hold it out*] keep it up.

## SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

---

MRS FORD. Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.

FORD. I shall find you anon.

EVANS. 'Tis unreasonable! Will you take up your wife's clothes? Come away.

FORD. Empty the basket, I say!

MRS FORD. Why, man, why?

FORD. Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed out of my house yesterday in this basket: why may not he be there again? In my house I am sure he is: my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen. 122

MRS FORD. If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

PAGE. Here's no man.

SHAL. By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford; this wrongs you.

EVANS. Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart: this is jealousies.

FORD. Well, he's not here I seek for. 140

PAGE. No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

FORD. Help to search my house this one time. If I find not what I seek, show no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me, "As jealous as Ford, that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman." Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

---

143 *show no colour . . . extremity*] admit no reasonable pretext for my extreme courses.



MRS FORD. What, ho, Mistress Page! come you and the old woman down; my husband will come into the chamber.

FORD. Old woman! what old woman's that?

MRS FORD. Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford. 150

FORD. A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element: we know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down, I say!

MRS FORD. Nay, good, sweet husband!—Good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

*Re-enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, and MISTRESS PAGE*

MRS PAGE. Come, Mother Prat: come, give me your hand. 161

FORD. I'll prat her. [*Beating him*] Out of my door, you witch, you hag, you baggage, you polecat, you ronyon! out, out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you. [*Exit Falstaff.*]

155 *by the figure*] by casting the figure, by calculating the horoscope.

156 *daubery*] cheating. The verb "daub" is similarly used.

163 *hag*] This is the reading of the Third and later Folios. The First and Second Folios read *rag*. But *hag* has already been used at line 157. "Rag" was, however, occasionally employed as a term of contempt.

SCENE II MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

MRS PAGE. Are you not ashamed? I think you have killed the poor woman.

MRS FORD. Nay, he will do it. 'T is a goodly credit for you.

FORD. Hang her, witch!

EVANS. By yea and no, I think the 'oman is a witch indeed: I like not when a 'oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under his muffler. 172

FORD. Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you, follow; see but the issue of my jealousy: if I cry out thus upon no trial, never trust me when I open again.

PAGE. Let's obey his humour a little further: come, gentlemen. [*Exeunt Ford, Page, Shal., Caius, and Evans.*]

MRS PAGE. Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

MRS FORD. Nay, by the mass, that he did not; he beat him most unpitifully methought. 180

MRS PAGE. I'll have the cudgel hallowed and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

MRS FORD. What think you? may we, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

MRS PAGE. The spirit of wantonness is, sure, scared out of him: if the devil have him not in fee-simple, with fine and recovery, he will never, I think, in the way of waste, attempt us again.

174-175 *cry out . . . again*] The expression is drawn from hunting, in which the hounds cry out when they find the scent. "Open" means "open mouth," "give tongue."

188 *fine and recovery*] See note on *Com. of Errors*, II, ii, 72: "May he

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

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MRS FORD. Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him ? 191

MRS PAGE. Yes, by all means ; if it be but to scrape the figures out of your husband's brains. If they can find in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

MRS FORD. I'll warrant they'll have him publicly shamed : and methinks there would be no period to the jest, should he not be publicly shamed.

MRS PAGE. Come, to the forge with it, then ; shape it : I would not have things cool. [*Exeunt.* 200]

### SCENE III — A ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter* HOST and BARDOLPH

BARD. Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses : the duke himself will be to-morrow at court, and they are going to meet him.

HOST. What duke should that be comes so secretly ? I hear not of him in the court. Let me speak with the gentlemen : they speak English ?

BARD. Ay, sir ; I'll call them to you.

HOST. They shall have my horses ; but I'll make them pay ; I'll sauce them : they have had my house a

---

not do it by *fine and recovery* ?" The legal terms imply the fullest possible right of possession.

193 *figures*] imaginary forms, ideas. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, II, i, 231 : "Thou hast no *figures* [*i. e.* vain fancies], nor no fantasies, Which busy care draws in the brains of men."

## SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

week at command ; I have turned away my other guests : 10  
they must come off ; I'll sauce them. Come. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE IV — A ROOM IN FORD'S HOUSE

*Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and  
SIR HUGH EVANS*

EVANS. 'T is one of the best discretions of a 'oman as  
ever I did look upon.

PAGE. And did he send you both these letters at an  
instant ?

MRS PAGE. Within a quarter of an hour.

FORD. Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou  
wilt ;

I rather will suspect the sun with cold  
Than thee with wantonness : now doth thy honour  
stand,

In him that was of late an heretic,  
As firm as faith.

PAGE. 'T is well, 't is well ; no more : 10  
Be not as extreme in submission  
As in offence.

But let our plot go forward : let our wives  
Yet once again, to make us public sport,  
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,  
Where we may take him, and disgrace him for it.

FORD. There is no better way than that they spoke of.

PAGE. How ? to send him word they'll meet him in  
the Park at midnight ? Fie, fie ! he'll never come.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

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EVANS. You say he has been thrown in the rivers, and  
has been grievously peaten, as an old 'oman : methinks  
there should be terrors in him that he should not come ;  
methinks his flesh is punished, he shall have no desires.

PAGE. So think I too.

MRS FORD. Devise but how you 'll use him when he  
comes,

And let us two devise to bring him thither.

MRS PAGE. There is' an old tale goes that Herne the  
hunter,

Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,  
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,  
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns ; 30  
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,  
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain  
In a most hideous and dreadful manner :  
You have heard of such a spirit ; and well you know  
The superstitious idle-headed eld  
Received, and did deliver to our age,  
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

PAGE. Why, yet there want not many that do fear  
In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak :  
But what of this ?

MRS FORD. Marry, this is our device ; 40  
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us.

---

31 *takes the cattle*] strikes the cattle with disease. Cf. *Lear*, II, iv, 161-162: "Strike her young bones, You *taking* airs, with lameness."

40-41 *Marry . . . us*] This speech is given far more explicitly in the First and early Quartos, and thence most editors derive

## SCENE IV MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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PAGE. Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come :  
And in this shape when you have brought him thither,  
What shall be done with him ? what is your plot ?

MRS PAGE. That likewise have we thought upon, and  
thus :

Nan Page my daughter and my little son  
And three or four more of their growth we'll dress  
Like urchins, ouphes and fairies, green and white,  
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,  
And rattles in their hands : upon a sudden, 50  
As Falstaff, she, and I, are newly met,  
Let them from forth a sawpit rush at once  
With some diffused song : upon their sight,  
We two in great amazedness will fly :  
Then let them all encircle him about,  
And, fairy-like, to pinch the unclean knight ;  
And ask him why, that hour of fairy revel,  
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread  
In shape profane.

MRS FORD. And till he tell the truth,  
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound, 60  
And burn him with their tapers.

---

a third line, *Disguis'd like Herne with huge horns on his head.*  
Some such insertion seems necessary to explain the next  
speech.

56 *to pinch*] This is the Folio reading, for which editors have substituted *to-pinch*, where "to" is regarded as an intensive prefix. Such a form is found elsewhere. Cf. Philemon Holland's translation of *Pliny's Nat. Hist.*, X, ch. 74 : "Shee will all *to-pinch* and nip both the fox and her cubs."

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

---

MRS PAGE. The truth being known,  
We'll all present ourselves, dis-horn the spirit,  
And mock him home to Windsor.

FORD. The children must  
Be practised well to this, or they'll ne'er do 't.

EVANS. I will teach the children their behaviours;  
and I will be like a jack-an-apes also, to burn the knight  
with my taber.

FORD. That will be excellent. I'll go buy them  
vizards.

MRS PAGE. My Nan shall be the queen of all the  
fairies, 70  
Finely attired in a robe of white.

PAGE. That silk will I go buy. [*Aside*] And in that  
time

Shall Master Slender steal my Nan away,  
And marry her at Eton. Go send to Falstaff straight.

FORD. Nay, I'll to him again in name of Brook:  
He'll tell me all his purpose: sure, he'll come.

MRS PAGE. Fear not you that. Go get us properties  
And tricking for our fairies.

EVANS. Let us about it: it is admirable pleasures and  
fery honest knaveries. [*Exeunt Page, Ford, and Evans.* 80

MRS PAGE. Go, Mistress Ford,  
Send quickly to Sir John, to know his mind.

[*Exit Mrs Ford.*]

I'll to the doctor: he hath my good will,  
And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.  
That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot;  
And he my husband best of all affects.

## SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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The doctor is well money'd, and his friends  
Potent at court : he, none but he, shall have her,  
Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her.  
[*Exit.*]

### SCENE V — A ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter* HOST and SIMPLE

HOST. What wouldst thou have, boor ? what, thick-skin ? speak, breathe, discuss ; brief, short, quick, snap.

SIM. Marry, sir, I come to speak with Sir John Falstaff from Master Slender.

HOST. There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed, and truckle-bed ; 't is painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new. Go knock and call ; he'll speak like an Anthropophaginian unto thee : knock, I say.

SIM. There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up <sup>10</sup> into his chamber : I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come down ; I come to speak with her, indeed.

HOST. Ha ! a fat woman ! the knight may be robbed : I'll call. — Bully knight ! bully Sir John ! speak from thy lungs military : art thou there ? it is thine host, thine Ephesian, calls.

---

8 *Anthropophaginian*] “Anthropophagi” was the accepted term for man-eaters or cannibals. “Anthropophaginian” is mine host's invention, and is coined on the analogy of “Carthaginian.”

16 *Ephesian*] This word has much the same significance in Elizabethan slang as “Corinthian,” i. e., a good fellow, a man of mettle.



MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

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FAL. [*Above*] How now, mine host !

HOST. Here's a Bohemian-Tartar tarries the coming down of thy fat woman. Let her descend, bully, let her descend ; my chambers are honourable : fie ! privacy ? 20  
fie !

*Enter FALSTAFF*

FAL. There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with me ; but she's gone.

SIM. Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of Brentford ?

FAL. Ay, marry, was it, muscle-shell : what would you with her ?

SIM. My master, sir, Master Slender, sent to her, seeing her go thorough the streets, to know, sir, whether one Nym, sir, that beguiled him of a chain, had the chain or no.

FAL. I spake with the old woman about it.

30

SIM. And what says she, I pray, sir ?

FAL. Marry, she says that the very same man that beguiled Master Slender of his chain cozened him of it.

SIM. I would I could have spoken with the woman herself ; I had other things to have spoken with her too from him.

FAL. What are they ? let us know.

HOST. Ay, come ; quick.

---

18 *Bohemian-Tartar*] a grandiloquent periphrasis for " gipsy."

25 *muscle-shell*] Simple's lips are agape, like the shells of a mussel.

SCENE V. MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

SIM. I may not conceal them, sir.

HOST. Conceal them, or thou diest.

40

SIM. Why, sir, they were nothing but about Mistress Anne Page; to know if it were my master's fortune to have her or no.

FAL. 'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

SIM. What, sir?

FAL. To have her, or no. Go; say the woman told me so.

SIM. May I be bold to say so, sir?

FAL. Ay, sir; like who more bold.

SIM. I thank your worship: I shall make my master glad with these tidings. [Exit. 50]

HOST. Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly, Sir John. Was there a wise woman with thee?

FAL. Ay, that there was, mine host; one that hath taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life; and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

*Enter BARDOLPH*

BARD. Out, alas, sir! cozenage, mere cozenage!

HOST. Where be my horses? speak well of them, varletto. 60

BARD. Run away with the cozeners: for so soon as I came beyond Eton, they threw me off, from behind one

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39 *conceal*] blunder for "reveal."

56 *was paid*] was paid out, punished, beaten. The same pun is found in *Cymb.*, V, iv, 161: "Sorry that you have *paid* too much, and sorry that you are *paid* too much."

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

of them, in a slough of mire ; and set spurs and away, like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses.

HOST. They are gone but to meet the duke, villain : do not say they be fled ; Germans are honest men.

*Enter* SIR HUGH EVANS

EVANS. Where is mine host ?

HOST. What is the matter, sir ?

EVANS. Have a care of your entertainments : there is a friend of mine come to town, tells me there is three <sup>70</sup> cozen-germans that has cozened all the hosts of Readins, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you : you are wise, and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks, and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well. [*Exit.*]

64 *Faustuses*] a probable reference to Marlowe's tragedy of *Dr. Faustus*. Cf. I, i, 117, *supra*, "How now, Mephostophilus!"

70-71 *there is three cozen-germans*] There is a plain reference here to a contemporary episode of historic importance. The First Quarto reads, *there is three sorts of cosen garmombles*. "Garmombles" seems to be a burlesque rendering of the German name "Mompelgard." In 1592 Frederick, Duke of Wirtemberg, who was well known in England during his stay by his subordinate title of Count Mompelgard, was granted official permission to requisition post-horses free of charge — a grant which offended innkeepers. Count Mompelgard seems to have actually visited inns at Reading, Maidenhead, and Colebrook, the places mentioned in the text. The mention of "a duke de Jamany" *i. e.* Germany (l. 80) strongly supports the identification. The Duke's journal of his visit to England was printed in 1602.

74 *vlouting-stocks*] flouts. The word with its more regular sense of "butts" has already come from Evans' lips, III, i, 108, *supra*.

## SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS*

CAIUS. Vere is mine host de Jarteer ?

HOST. Here, master doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.

CAIUS. I cannot tell vat is dat : but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany : by my trot, dere is no duke dat the court is know to come. I tell you for good vill : adieu. [Exit.

HOST. Hue and cry, villain, go ! — Assist me, knight. — I am undone ! — Fly, run, hue and cry, villain ! — I am undone ! [Exeunt Host and Bard.

FAL. I would all the world might be cozened ; for I have been cozened and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the court, how I have been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgelled, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me : I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

Now, whence come you ?

QUICK. From the two parties, forsooth.

FAL. The devil take one party, and his dam the other ! and so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villanous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear. 101

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT IV

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QUICK. And have not they suffered? Yes, I warrant; speciously one of them; Mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

FAL. What tell'st thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford: but that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman, delivered me, the knave constable had set me i' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch. 112

QUICK. Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber: you shall hear how things go; and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado here is to bring you together! Sure, one of you does not serve heaven well, that you are so crossed.

FAL. Come up into my chamber. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE VI—THE SAME

#### ANOTHER ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter FENTON and Host*

HOST. Master Fenton, talk not to me; my mind is heavy: I will give over all.

FENT. Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose, And, as I am a gentleman, I'll give thee A hundred pound in gold more than your loss.

---

103 *speciously*] blunder for "especially." Cf. III, iv, 106, *supra*.

## SCENE VI MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

HOST. I will hear you, Master Fenton ; and I will at the least keep your counsel.

FENT. From time to time I have acquainted you  
 With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page ;  
 Who mutually hath answer'd my affection, 10  
 So far forth as herself might be her chooser,  
 Even to my wish : I have a letter from her  
 Of such contents as you will wonder at ;  
 The mirth whereof so larded with my matter,  
 That neither singly can be manifested,  
 Without the show of both ; fat Falstaff  
 Hath a great scene : the image of the jest  
 I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host.  
 To-night at Herne's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,  
 Must my sweet Nan present the Fairy Queen ; 20  
 The purpose why, is here : in which disguise,  
 While other jests are something rank on foot,  
 Her father hath commanded her to slip  
 Away with Slender, and with him at Eton  
 Immediately to marry : she hath consented :  
 Now, sir,  
 Her mother, even strong against that match,  
 And firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed  
 That he shall likewise shuffle her away,  
 While other sports are tasking of their minds, 30  
 And at the deanery, where a priest attends,  
 Straight marry her : to this her mother's plot

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16 *fat Falstaff*] The earlier Quartos insert *wherein* before *fat Falstaff*.  
 The insertion seems necessary to complete the line.

She seemingly obedient likewise hath  
Made promise to the doctor. Now, thus it rests :  
Her father means she shall be all in white ;  
And in that habit, when Slender sees his time  
To take her by the hand and bid her go,  
She shall go with him : her mother hath intended,  
The better to denote her to the doctor, —  
For they must all be mask'd and vizarded, — 40  
That quaint in green she shall be loose enrobed,  
With ribands pendent, flaring 'bout her head ;  
And when the doctor spies his vantage ripe,  
To pinch her by the hand, and, on that token,  
The maid hath given consent to go with him.

HOST. Which means she to deceive, father or mother ?

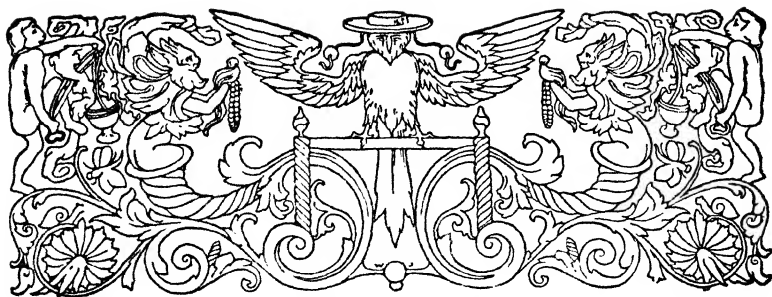
FENT. Both, my good host, to go along with me :  
And here it rests, — that you 'll procure the vicar  
To stay for me at church 'twixt twelve and one,  
And, in the lawful name of marrying, 50  
To give our hearts united ceremony.

HOST. Well, husband your device ; I 'll to the vicar :  
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

FENT. So shall I evermore be bound to thee ;  
Besides, I 'll make a present recompence. [Exeunt.]

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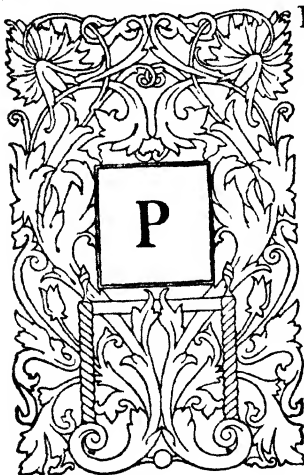
51 *united ceremony*] uniting ceremony, ceremony of union.



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I  
A ROOM IN THE GARTER INN

*Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY*

FALSTAFF



RITHEE, NO MORE prattling; go. I'll hold. This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away! go. They say there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death. Away!

QUICK. I'll provide you a chain; and I'll do what I can to get you a pair of horns.

FAL. Away, I say; time wears: hold up your head, and mince. *[Exit Mrs Quickly.]*

*Enter FORD*

How now, Master Brook! Master Brook, the matter will be known to-night, or never. Be you in the Park 10



# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT V

about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

FORD. Went you not to her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had appointed?

FAL. I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a poor old man: but I came from her, Master Brook, like a poor old woman. That same knave Ford, her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you:— he beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of man, Master Brook, I fear not Goliath with <sup>20</sup> a weaver's beam; because I know also life is a shuttle. I am in haste; go along with me: I'll tell you all, Master Brook. Since I plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, I knew not what 't was to be beaten till lately. Follow me: I'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II— WINDSOR PARK

*Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

PAGE. Come, come; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch till we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

8 *mince*] walk with affected gait, with short steps.

21 *life is a shuttle*] Cf. *Job*, vii, 6: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."

23 *plucked geese*] stripped living geese of their feathers as boys were wont to do.

### SCENE III MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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SLEN. Ay, forsooth ; I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another : I come to her in white, and cry, “mum ;” she cries “budget ;” and by that we know one another.

SHAL. That’s good too : but what needs either your “mum” or her “budget” ? the white will decipher her well enough. It hath struck ten o’clock. 10

PAGE. The night is dark ; light and spirits will become it well. Heaven prosper our sport ! No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let’s away ; follow me. [*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE III—A STREET LEADING TO THE PARK

*Enter* MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and DOCTOR CAIUS

MRS PAGE. Master Doctor, my daughter is in green : when you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the deanery, and dispatch it quickly. Go before into the Park : we two must go together.

CAIUS. I know vat I have to do. Adieu.

MRS PAGE. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit Caius.*] My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor’s marrying my daughter : but ’tis no matter ; better a little chiding than a great deal of heart-break. 10

---

6 “mum” . . . “budget”] Both were whispered exclamations implying the need of keeping secrets. The words are repeated, line 9, and *infra*, V, v, 186. Cf. Cotgrave’s *French-Engl. Dict.*, “To play at mumbudget, Demeurer court, ne sonner mot.”

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT V

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MRS FORD. Where is Nan now and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil Hugh?

MRS PAGE. They are all couched in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscured lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

MRS FORD. That cannot choose but amaze him.

MRS PAGE. If he be not amazed, he will be mocked; if he be amazed, he will every way be mocked.

MRS FORD. We'll betray him finely.

20

MRS PAGE. Against such lewdsters and their lechery Those that betray them do no treachery.

MRS FORD. The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak!  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — WINDSOR PARK

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS disguised, with others as Fairies*

EVANS. Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts: be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-ords, do as I bid you: come, come; trib, trib.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V — ANOTHER PART OF THE PARK

*Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne*

FAL. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on. Now, the hot-blooded gods assist me! Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa;

# SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

love set on thy horns. O powerful love! that, in some respects, makes a beast a man; in some other, a man a beast. You were also, Jupiter, a swan for the love of Leda. O omnipotent Love! how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose! A fault done first in the form of a beast; — O Jove, a beastly fault! And then another fault in the semblance of a fowl: — think on 't, Jove; a foul fault! When gods have hot backs, what 10 shall poor men do? For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow? — Who comes here? my doe?

*Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE*

MRS FORD. Sir John! art thou there, my deer? my male deer?

FAL. My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves, hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here. 20

17-18 *rain potatoes*] Potatoes were in early days reckoned aphrodisiacs, like "eringoes" (the candied root of the sea holly), line 19. Potatoes and eringoes are frequently mentioned together by Elizabethan dramatists in the same significance as in the text. Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Sea Voyage*, III, i, "O for some *eringoes Potatoes* or cantharides." Shakespeare makes only one other reference to potato. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, V. ii, 56, "potato-finger," where he again notices its provocative character.

18 *the tune of Green Sleeves*] See II, i, 47, *supra*, and note.

19 *kissing-comfits*] perfumed sugar plums, which made the breath sweet. Shakespeare may have recalled a passage in Holinshed's

# MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT V

MRS FORD. Mistress Page is come with me, sweet-heart.

FAL. Divide me like a bribe buck, each a haunch: I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Herne the hunter? Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

[Noise within.

MRS PAGE. Alas, what noise?

MRS FORD. Heaven forgive our sins!

FAL. What should this be?

30

MRS FORD. }  
MRS PAGE. } Away, away!

[They run off.

FAL. I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that's in me should set hell on fire; he would never else cross me thus.

*Enter* SIR HUGH EVANS, *disguised as before*; PISTOL, *as Hobgoblin*;

MISTRESS QUICKLY, ANNE PAGE, and others, *as Fairies, with tapers*.

QUICK. Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,  
You moonshine revellers, and shades of night,

---

*Chronicle* for the year 1583, where in a dramatic performance at Court during the scenic presentation of a tempest, "It hailed smal confects, rained rose-water, and snew an artificial kind of snow."

22 *bribe buck*] Theobald's emendation of the early reading, *brib'd buck*.

It probably means a buck of the fine quality bred for giving away as bribes or presents.

23-24 *the fellow of this walk*] the forester or gamekeeper.

34 *Enter . . . tapers*] In the early Quartos this stage direction reads

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,  
Attend your office and your quality.  
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

PIST. Elves, list your names ; silence, you airy toys. 40  
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap :  
Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept,  
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry :  
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

FAL. They are fairies ; he that speaks to them shall  
die :

I'll wink and couch : no man their works must eye.

*[Lies down upon his face.]*

EVANS. Where's Bede ? Go you, and where you find  
a maid

That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,  
Raise up the organs of her fantasy :  
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy : 50  
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,  
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.

---

thus : "Enter Sir Hugh like a Satyre, and boyes drest like Fayries, Mistresse Quickly, like the queene of Fayries; they sing a song about him and afterward speake."

37 *orphan heirs . . . destiny*] miraculously conceived inheritors of immortality. "Orphan heirs" is synonymous with "unfathered heirs," in 2 *Hen. IV*, IV, iv, 122, an expression applicable to elves not begotten of mortal parents, but miraculously created by divine or demoniac powers. "Of fixed destiny" is equivalent to "endowed with immortality," of fixed and unchangeable destiny.

47 *Bede*] This is the name given to the fairy messenger in the *Folios*. The early Quartos read *Pead*, which is probably more in keeping with Sir Hugh's ordinary dialect.

QUICK. About, about ;  
 Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out :  
 Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room ;  
 That it may stand till the perpetual doom,  
 In state as wholesome as in state 't is fit,  
 Worthy the owner, and the owner it.  
 The several chairs of order look you scour  
 With juice of balm and every precious flower : 60  
 Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,  
 With loyal blazon, evermore be blest !  
 And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,  
 Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring :  
 Th' expressure that it bears, green let it be,  
 More fertile-fresh than all the field to see ;  
 And *Honi soit qui mal y pense* write  
 In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue, and white ;  
 Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,  
 Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee : 70  
 Fairies use flowers for their charactery.  
 Away ; disperse : but till 't is one o'clock,  
 Our dance of custom round about the oak  
 Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

EVANS. Pray you, lock hand in hand ; yourselves in  
 order set ;  
 And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,

---

61 *instalment*] The word which commonly means "installation" seems to signify here the "stall" of a knight of the Garter.

71 *charactery*] written cipher ; often used in the sense of "short-hand."

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

To guide our measure round about the tree

But, stay ; I smell a man of middle-earth.

FAL. Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest  
he transform me to a piece of cheese ! 80

PIST. Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy  
birth.

QUICK. With trial-fire touch me his finger-end :  
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend,  
And turn him to no pain ; but if he start,  
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

PIST. A trial, come.

EVANS. Come, will this wood take fire ?  
[*They burn him with their tapers.*]

FAL. Oh, Oh, Oh !

QUICK. Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire !  
About him, fairies ; sing a scornful rhyme ;  
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time. 90

SONG

Fie on sinful fantasy !  
Fie on lust and luxury !  
Lust is but a bloody fire,  
Kindled with unchaste desire,

---

78 *middle*] a conventional poetic epithet. In the current astronomical system the earth was the *middle* region of the universe, of which the upper region was the home of God and the lower region the abode of the fairies.

84 *turn him*] put him, a common contemporary usage.

91 *fantasy*] love: see note on *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 32.

92 *luxury*] lasciviousness, incontinence. Cf. *Lear*, IV, vi, 119: "To 't, *luxury*, pell-mell ; for I lack soldiers."

93 *bloody fire*] fire of blood.



Fed in heart, whose flames aspire,  
 As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.  
 Pinch him, fairies, mutually ;  
 Pinch him for his villany ;  
 Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,  
 Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

100

*During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. DOCTOR CAIUS comes one way, and steals away a boy in green ; SLENDER another way, and takes off a boy in white ; and FENTON comes, and steals away Mrs ANNE PAGE. A noise of hunting is heard within. All the Fairies run away. FALSTAFF pulls off his buck's head, and rises.*

*Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD*

PAGE. Nay, do not fly ; I think we have watch'd you  
 now :

Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn ?

MRS PAGE. I pray you, come, hold up the jest no  
 higher.

Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives ?  
 See you these, husband ? do not these fair yokes  
 Become the forest better than the town ?

FORD. Now, sir, who's a cuckold now ? Master  
 Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave ; here are

100 *During this song . . . rises*] This stage direction is absent from the First Folio, but it figures in the early Quartos, whence Theobald and succeeding editors have borrowed it.

105 *fair yokes*] This is the reading of the First Folio, which the Second and later Folios changed to *okes*, i. e. oaks. The reference, of course, is to the horns, which sometimes take a shape resembling yokes for cattle. It is less reasonable to identify the horns with the branches of an oak tree.

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

his horns, Master Brook : and, Master Brook, he hath enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to Master Brook ; his horses are arrested for it, Master Brook.

112

MRS FORD. Sir John, we have had ill luck ; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again ; but I will always count you my deer.

FAL. I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

FORD. Ay, and an ox too : both the proofs are extant.

117

FAL. And these are not fairies ? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies : and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 't is upon ill employment !

EVANS. Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

FORD. Well said, fairy Hugh.

EVANS. And leave you your jealousies too, I pray you.

FORD. I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able to woo her in good English.

130

FAL. Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it,

---

122 *despite of the teeth of*] An emphatic conjunction of "despite" and "in the teeth of."

123 *Jack-a-Lent*] See *supra*, III, iii, 22, where the word has already been cited and explained.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ACT V

that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? shall I have a coxcomb of frize? 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.

EVANS. Seese is not good to give putter; your pelly is all putter.

FAL. "Seese" and "putter"? Have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm. 140

MRS PAGE. Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

FORD. What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

MRS PAGE. A puffed man?

PAGE. Old, cold, withered, and of intolerable entrails?

FORD. And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

PAGE. And as poor as Job?

FORD. And as wicked as his wife? 150

EVANS. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack, and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings, and swearings, and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

FAL. Well, I am your theme: you have the start of

---

134 *a coxcomb of frize*] A professional fool's cap made of the rough woollen cloth which was a leading Welsh manufacture.

153 *pribbles and prabbles*] See note on I, i, 50, *supra*, and cf. IV, i, 45, *supra*, "leave your prabbles."

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

me ; I am dejected ; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel : ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me : use me as you will.

FORD. Marry, sir, we 'll bring you to Windsor, to one Master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to whom you should have been a pandar : over and above that you have suffered, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction. 162

PAGE. Yet be cheerful, knight : thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house ; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee : tell her Master Slender hath married her daughter.

MRS PAGE. [*Aside.*] Doctors doubt that : if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife.

*Enter SLENDER*

SLEN. Whoa, ho ! ho, father Page !

PAGE. Son, how now ! how now, son ! have you dispatched ? 171

SLEN. Dispatched ! I 'll make the best in Gloucestershire know on 't ; would I were hanged, la, else !

PAGE. Of what, son ?

SLEN. I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had

---

156 *ignorance . . . plummet o'er me*] ignorance, helplessness overcomes me with its leaden weight. "Plummet" is the weight of lead attached to the "plumbline." Cf. Shirley's *Love in Amaze*, IV, 2 : "What ! art melancholy ? What hath hung *plummets* on thy nimble soul ?"

not been i' the church, I would have swung him, or he should have swung me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir! — and 't is a post-master's boy.

PAGE. Upon my life, then, you took the wrong. 180

SLEN. What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

PAGE. Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you how you should know my daughter by her garments?

SLEN. I went to her in white, and cried "mum," and she cried "budget," as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

MRS PAGE. Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose; turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married. 192

*Enter CAIUS*

CAIUS. Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened: I ha' married un garçon, a boy; un paysan, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozened.

MRS PAGE. Why, did you take her in green?

CAIUS. Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy: by gar, I'll raise all Windsor. [*Exit.*]

FORD. This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

SCENE V MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

PAGE. My heart misgives me: — here comes Master Fenton.

201

*Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE*

How now, Master Fenton!

ANNE. Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

PAGE. Now, mistress, how chance you went not with Master Slender?

MRS PAGE. Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

FENT. You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.  
You would have married her most shamefully,  
Where there was no proportion held in love.  
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted, 210  
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.  
The offence is holy that she hath committed;  
And this deceit loses the name of craft,  
Of disobedience, or unduteous title;  
Since therein she doth evitate and shun  
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,  
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

FORD. Stand not amazed; here is no remedy:  
In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;  
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate. 220

FAL. I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand  
to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.

221 *stand*] a hiding place in the forest, whence the huntsman aims his arrow at the deer. Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, i, 10.

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PAGE. Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!

What cannot be eschew'd must be embraced.

FAL. When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased.

MRS PAGE. Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,

Heaven give you many, many merry days!  
Good husband, let us every one go home,  
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;  
Sir John and all.

FORD. Let it be so. Sir John, 23  
To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word;  
For he to-night shall lie with Mistress Ford. [*Exeunt.*]

